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A Book for the Sorrowful





A BOOK FOR THE SORROWFUL.



A
BOOK FOR THE SORROWFUL;

OR,

DIVINE TRUTH

IN ITS

RELATION TO HUMAN SUFFERING.

BY THE

REV. EDMUND HEYWOOD.


THIRD EDITION.



"Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way:
But to act, that each to-morrow
Finds us farther than to-day."—LONGFELLOW.

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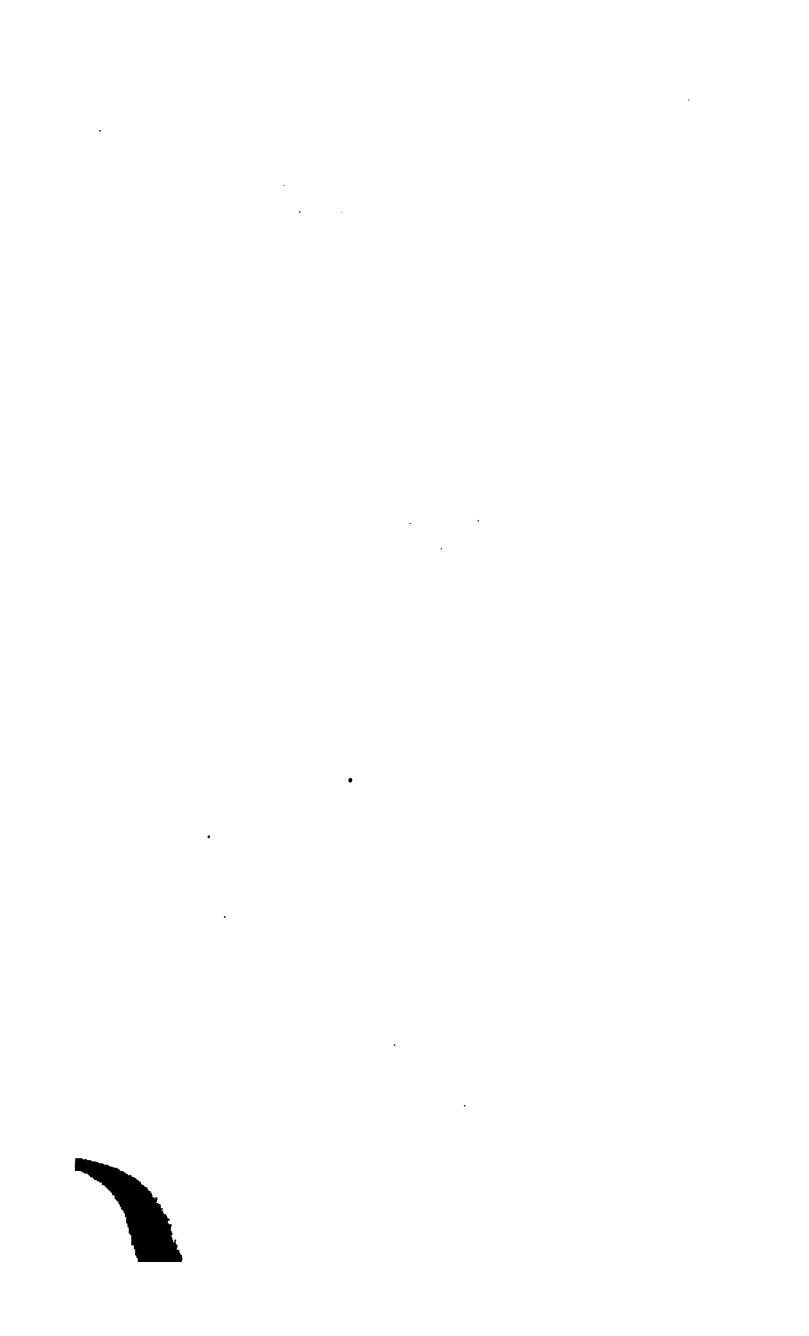


Printed by William Freeman, 102 Fleet Street, London.

TO
"THEM THAT MOURN IN ZION,"

This Little Book

ON
DIVINE TRUTH
IN ITS
RELATION TO HUMAN SUFFERING,
IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIRD EDITION.

IN this Work the cheering consolations of the Gospel are most prominently set forth by one who was himself specially qualified, by having had to pass through the fire of affliction. The present edition has been published at the desire of the Friends of the deceased Author.

His Widow and Children will share in the profits.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE First Edition of this little Work was sold in a few weeks ; a second has been often called for, and the Author advised to re-issue his book ; but circumstances, that need not now be detailed, have prevented his doing so. At length, however, he ventures on again making his bow to that public who received with so much kindness the First Edition. That his book should have secured the kindly suffrages of persons occupying a position in the literary world so different as George Gilfillan, and the Editor of the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* ; Dr. Campbell, of the *Christian Witness* and the *British Standard*, and David Thomas, of the *Homilist* ; William Cooke, of the *Methodist New Connexion*, and Dr. James Hamilton, author of "The Mount of Olives," and "Life in Earnest ;" as well as the Editor of *Tait's Magazine*, and

the Rev. Robert Eckett, of the *United Methodist Free Churches*—surprised no one so much as himself. He sincerely thanks the above gentlemen for the kindness of spirit distinguishing their notices of his book ; and to justify the favourable opinion which they and others have expressed, he has felt constrained to use every effort in his power to make this Second Edition still more adapted to the “ end it seeks.”

In going carefully over it, the Author has altered every sentence that he thought he could mend. He has also added sixty or seventy pages of original matter. The Editor of the *Christian Witness* expressed a wish for the enlargement of the Essay on Spiritual Depression : it is now enlarged to more than double its former length, and it is hoped has fewer imperfections than before.

He asks the forbearance of his readers in reference to the numerous poetic quotations in his book. He has himself often felt the soothing power of the strains that he has quoted, and could not resist the desire of enriching his pages by their insertion. With some he believes they will be felt to be the most inviting portions of the volume, and he hopes that few will complain of their unsuitableness.

Both before and since the issue of the First

Edition, the Author has often had the principles of which he has here written tested in his own experience. Death has robbed him of many friends. His own domestic circle has been often invaded, and *three* of his dear little ones have been snatched away—who seemed like

“ Cherubs that had lost their way, and wandered hither :
So their stay with us was short.”

He has felt how precious is the assurance of Jesus, that “ of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Nor has he been insensible to the soothing influence of lines like the following, from the pen of Dr. Hinds :—

“ The baby wept ;
The mother took it from the nurse’s arms,
And soothed its griefs, and stilled its vain alarms,
And baby slept.

“ Again it weeps,
And God doth take it from the mother’s arms—
From present pain, and future unknown harms,
And baby sleeps.”

His abundant and repeated confirmatory, and illustrative, as well as consolatory quotations from the Word of God, and especially from the Book of Psalms, will, he hopes, be not unacceptable to his readers. Of all writings, the Psalms of David have for him the greatest charm and attractiveness. Their

literary beauty—their immense variety—their portraiture of the varied phases of piety, from the lowest wail of penitential sorrow, to the highest strains of sanctified spiritual rapture—their tone of plaintive tenderness—their wild, glad songs of praise—and the union of depth, of sensitiveness, and sublimity, in their matchless pages—all combine to make them his daily solace. Nor is he insensible to the truthfulness of the sentiment of a German poet :—

“ The heavier cross, the heartier prayer,—
The bruised herbs most fragrant are.
If wind and sky were always fair,
The sailor would not watch the star ;
And David’s Psalms had ne’er been sung,
If grief his heart had never wrung.”

David Thomas, in his admirable *Homilist*, called this little work “a heart book.” His description is a true one. Never was any book more thoroughly the out-gushing of an author’s heart than is this. It was written at a time of deep and varied personal sorrow. It is more than anything else the child of sorrow, of sanctified sorrow—though his friends are pleased to tell him that his countenance bears few marks of his having passed through a baptism of special suffering. But he may as well

inform the reader that the sketch found on pages 162 to 166 of this Edition is a simple portraiture of his own case. More than thirteen years ago, he was constrained to retire for a time from the public ministry, under the gloomy influence of nervous prostration and despondency. And when, about twelve years ago, having more than regained his former composure, and mental serenity, he resumed his ministerial and pastoral duties, the very first person to whom he was taken to pay a pastoral visit was suffering from the same cause, and was in religious despair. He felt a mournful pleasure in speaking words of sympathy to that smitten one. Since then, while enjoying personally remarkably good health, and, in the midst of many domestic bereavements and afflictions, a cheerful and happy flow of spirits, he has ever felt most at home in expatiating on the winning and consoling portions of divine truth. He hopes that these personal reminiscences and explanations will not be deemed egotistic, or an unsuitable introduction to the following pages.

He cannot close without an expression of thankfulness to the numerous friends who have encouraged him to publish, by their promises to subscribe for, and in other ways seek to promote, the circulation

of his book. By their kindness, he will be enabled to dispose of about one thousand copies on the day of publication. He has only to wish that the blessing of the "God of all comfort" may rest on both writer and readers, and that each may, in God's own good time, arrive safe in that glorious world, where

"No slightest touch of pain,
Nor sorrow's least alloy,
Can violate our rest, or stain
Our purity of joy.

"In that eternal day,
No clouds nor tempest rise ;
There gushing tears are wiped away
For ever from our eyes."

SYMPATHY WITH THE SORROWFUL.

"To him that is afflicted pity should be showed by his friends."—JOB.

"O God, my soul is cast down within me, therefore will I remember thee."—DAVID.

"God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us."
—PAUL.

AMONGST those who may read these pages there are doubtless some whom we may with special emphasis designate the *sorrowful*. In a world where causes of sorrow are so numerous, it cannot but be expected that these pages may be looked over by many who carry with them a sad heart. It may be that the lines of sorrow are traced in deep furrows on their brows. The eye, the dejected eye, may betoken grief. Or, underneath a bland and cheerful exterior there is hidden a bleeding heart. In secret the "eye pours out tears unto God." A worm may be eating up their joy. Hidden from others, it may be constantly gnawing their soul. From the crowd they may often retire, "like the stricken deer that left the herd." There may be a voice within which they suppress, which if uttered would find suitable expression in the plaintive and deeply melancholy language of Job, "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O my friends, for the

hand of God hath touched me." Years ago, death may have smitten down the arm on which they leaned. The delight of their eyes may have been taken away at a stroke. Their thoughts may often wander to the graveyard; and their "Meditations" be "among the tombs." They may be like "Rachael weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted because they are not." Or, with another, they may say, "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance in the dust."

It may be that adversity is their lot. That dreary, hungry, trying thing, poverty, may not look them in the face, but may have become their companion. They may have keen sensibilities, a strong sense of honour, a feeling approaching to a noble, modest independence. But unavoidable causes, circumstances over which they had no control, have cast them behind in the world. It is more than difficult for them to maintain a decent appearance. There are those whom they cannot meet without pain—without a blush. The most sensitive heart is visited by the most trying circumstances. The present is painful—deeply so. The future is dark. The most prudent and well-laid schemes may have been baffled. Hopes well-founded may have been doomed to repeated disappointment. Hard toil has been ill-rewarded. Confidence has been abused. A series of losses and misfortunes have succeeded each other with all but overwhelming rapidity. "The pillar of cloud,"

or the directing hand, would be gladly followed if it could be seen. But the sorrowful are edged in on every side. They "walk in darkness and have no light." They think that those on whose sympathy they had a right to count, look coolly upon them. They feel and could utter from their heart the words of Job, "To him that is afflicted pity should be shown by his friends."

Perhaps these lines will be read by some passing under the rod which we specially designate that of affliction. You are, and may long have been, strangers to good health. The ailments of the body oppress and weigh down the mind. A constant load is carried about by you. There is little that you can enjoy, because of the constant influence of weakness, weariness, and pain. While the rose mantles on the cheeks of others your cheeks are pale and wan, and to you "wearisome nights are appointed."

Or it may be that these remarks will meet the eye of one whose every prospect is darkened, and every cup embittered by the gloomy influence of nervous prostration and despondency. Such is the nature and influence of this malady, that everything, being seen through a misty and perverted medium, assumes an unnatural melancholy aspect. Or rather, the eye is so diseased, the powers of mental vision so deranged, as to prevent them from forming correct ideas of things. Such, too, is the nature and influence of this malady, that everything

that has a reference to the unhappy subject thereof, assumes a forbidding, *a frowning aspect*. Alas, my friend, the most cheering prospect has no charms for you. Indeed, as the presence of dainties as well as of common food is unpleasant to the sick, as light is painful to a diseased eye—so that which gives joy to others, and inspires them with gladness, seems to add to your sorrow. Even friendship, sweetner of life, can do but little to relieve and soothe you. It may be, too, that you have the misfortune to be placed among those who neither understand nor sympathise with you. In this world, alas, it is no rare thing for the depressed to be not only slighted, but rudely trampled upon. You may have felt all this. You, perhaps, began to read these lines, fearing that while the ordinarily sorrowful would be remembered, your case would be forgotten. I am sure, my dear readers, that if I am enabled to pen down anything that will, by the Divine blessing, lessen the sorrow or mitigate the grief of any one of the classes just named, I shall feel sincerely thankful. He that is inditing these lines has more than once been called to suffer. His mind has been torn with anguish. He holds out to his suffering brethren and sisters the hand of sympathy: and would like to comfort them with “the comfort by which he himself has been comforted of God.”

In much tenderness, I would remind you, my brethren, that you *are not alone*. You are not


treading an unfrequented path. You are not drinking a cup of which others have not tasted. The history of humanity—even the pious portions thereof—is made up, in no small degree, of sorrow. The sighs, coming up from the hearts of sufferers, are borne on every breeze. In the Book of God, you will meet with cases analagous to your own. The experience of Job is emphatically a case in point. A long-continued and heavy storm fell on his soul. His nature was keenly sensitive, and was assailed in its most vulnerable parts. Some of his outpourings of sorrow are among the most affectingly plaintive utterances of the human spirit. The harp of the “sweet singer of Israel” is often heard pouring out the most plaintive melancholy strains. We feel our hearts moved as the son of Jesse cries out, “O God, my soul is cast down within me.” “Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.” “Mine eye poureth out tears unto God.” What heart has not been melted and moved by the “Lamentations of Jeremiah?” We seem still to hear him—standing up amidst the desolations of his beloved country—as he mournfully says “*I am the man that hath seen affliction.*” “Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night.” Of Jesus Christ we need only say, that He “*was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.*” In the latter history of the Church, how many instances are

recorded of the gifted and the good having been great sufferers! Robert Hall's bodily system was "an apparatus of torture." His understanding, so clear and strong, twice "reeled, staggered, and went out of his course." Milton, the embodiment of beauty, sublimity, and deep devotion, was blind. Cowper, "the amiable bard of Olney," almost constantly suffered from nervous prostration and despondency. He says—

"The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown."

Such are the inscrutable arrangements of Divine Providence, that suffering and sorrow have ever been a portion of the experience of holysouls. Remember, my suffering friends, that the "same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

I would further affectionately remind you of some of the tenderest and most consoling declarations and promises of our Father who is in heaven. How condescending and beautiful is the following declaration: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him: for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." The more this promise is examined, the more beautiful and encouraging does it appear. If you ask *how* does a father pity his children? *When* is it that his pity and love for them are most tenderly drawn out and displayed? The answer will be, in the time of sickness and sorrow. The sick child has the largest share of parental care and thought.



The pale cheek, the dim eye, the falling tear of an ailing child strongly moves a father's pity. Well, "*Like* as a father pitieth his children, *so* the Lord pitieth them that fear him." But the tenderest sympathy of a father's heart fails of fully or most suitably illustrating the pity of God. Isaiah says, "As one whom his *mother* comforteth, *so* the Lord God will comfort you." "But Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me." But God says, "Can a woman forget her sucking-child; that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb; yea, they may forget, yet will I *not* forget thee. Behold I have graven thee on the palms of my hands." "But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel; fear not; I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; *Thou art mine*. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned: neither shall the flames kindle upon thee." How many thousands have these sweet promises consoled! How often have they consoled you! May they do so again. Grasp them, sufferer. They are *thine*. Make them experimentally so by personal appropriation. Here the mantle of love is unfolded, wrap it around you. Here the bosom of your God is opened, lay your weary head upon it. Go up "out of the wilderness leaning on the arm of your Beloved."

One or two passages I will quote from the New Testament :—" Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." " Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Peace I leave with you ; my peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth, give I unto you ; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

" Whom the Lord *loveth* He chasteneth." But He does not leave them. For He hath said, " I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Is it not delightfully true that we have " many exceeding great and precious promises."

I would also remind you of the testimony of some devout souls in reference to the supports they have enjoyed in their afflictions and sorrows, and the influence of suffering on their own souls. Trial is one of the means employed by Almighty God " for the perfecting of the saints." The fire is not to consume, but to refine us. Chastisement is not " for the present joyous but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby." David speaks favourably of its influence on himself. He does not say, " It was good for me that I slew Goliath, that I was anointed by Samuel, ascended the throne, rose to the highest distinction, and vanquished my foes ;" but he does say, " It is good for me that I have been afflicted." Job—when earth was dark—his mind in deep gloom—longing to commune with God—and his friends accusing him

of hypocrisy—thus appealed to Jehovah, “But he knoweth the way that I take ; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” Nor was he mistaken. The storm abated. The heavens became clear. The sky once more was calm and bright. The long, dark, stormy night, was succeeded by a calm morning, and a bright long day. Brethren “ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord. That the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.” The three noble Hebrew youths were taken care of during their day of comparative prosperity in Babylon. God was with them in the crowd. He preserved their feet from falling. But it was in the furnace that God’s presence was most visibly manifested. It was there that his care of them was most strikingly displayed. And, my suffering brother—

“In the furnace God may prove thee,
Thence to bring thee out more bright,
But can *never cease to love thee*.
Thou art precious in His sight ;
God is with thee, God thine everlasting light.”

It was when assailed by the wicked and hostile king that Elisha saw the “mountain filled with chariots of fire, and horses of fire.” Doubtless one of Daniel’s happiest nights was in the lions’ den ! Habakkuk says, “Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flocks shall be cut off from the

fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Paul says, " As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." " For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." He, if any one, knew what suffering was. It was while the disciples were in sorrow and needed consolation that Jesus so fully laid bare His tender soul, and uttered in their ears those charming discourses which John has recorded in his Gospel. It was while in Patmos, banished from the sweets of home and kindred, that Jesus appeared to that disciple whom he loved, comforted his heart, and revealed to Him the glories of the Apocalypse. The most tender and affectionately beautiful utterances of Jesus were in the ears of sorrow. After the sun has gone down, the splendours of the firmament are seen. It was while he was afflicted that Baxter wrote his " Saints' Rest." It was in Bedford jail that Bunyan wrote " The Pilgrim's Progress." It was while he was blind that Milton indited the sublimest, holiest poem ever composed by uninspired man. It was by one of the tenderests spirits, and when emerging from the most awful temptation, that that most charming hymn on Providence was written—

•
" God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform,
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

“Deep in unfathomable mines,
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.
“Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take ;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.”

Yes, Cowper went down into the waters, and from the depths brought up those pearls which he has strung so admirably in the hymn from which I have quoted. I have several times, in this article, alluded to Milton, and I cannot close without quoting some sublime lines, which he composed when aged, afflicted, poor, and blind. “They have been recently discovered among his manuscripts.”* I shall not soon forget the feelings with which I first read them. The piece is rather long, but full of poetry, full of piety, full of consolation :

“I am old and blind ;
Men point at me as smitten by God’s frown ;
Afflicted and deserted of my kind :
Yet I am not cast down. I am weak yet strong,
I murmur not that I no longer see—
Poor, old, and helpless, I the more belong,
Father Supreme, to Thee ! O merciful One !
When men are farthest, then Thou art most near ;
When friends pass by, my weakness shun,
Thy chariot I hear : thy glorious face
Is leaning towards me ; and its holy light
Shines in upon my lowly dwelling-place,
And there is no more night.

* “Christian Spectator.”

“ On my bended knee,
I recognise Thy purpose clearly shown.
My vision thou hast dimm'd, that I may see
Thyself—Thyself alone. I have naught to fear,
This darkness is the shadow of Thy wing—
Beneath it I am almost sacred : here
Can come no evil thing.
Oh ! I seem to stand
Trembling, where foot of mortal ne'er hath been,
Wrapp'd in the radiance of Thy sinless land,
Which eye hath never seen,
Visions come and go ;
Shapes of resplendent beauty round me throng,
From angel lips I seem to hear the flow
Of soft and holy song.
It is nothing now,
When heaven is opening on my sightless eyes,
When airs from Paradise refresh my brow,
The earth in darkness lies.
“ In a purer clime,
My being fills with rapture—waves of thought
Roll on my spirit—strains sublime
Break over me unsought.
Give me now my lyre !
I feel the stirrings of a gift divine,
Within my bosom glows unearthly fire,
Lit by no skill of mine.”

John Foster says, “ Milton's consecrated genius might harmoniously have mingled with the angels that announced the Messiah to be come, or that, on the spot, at the moment of his departure, predicted his coming again.” His genius shall mingle its sublime strains on our page with those of the writer

of the book of "The Revelation:"—"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and praise, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more; neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

SORROWS OF HUMANITY AND GOSPEL CONSOLATION.

"If there be therefore any consolation in Christ."—PAUL.

"To comfort all that mourn."—ISAIAH.

"I will not leave you comfortless."—JESUS CHRIST.

THE statement of Job—though uttered under deep mental depression—that "man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward," is confirmed by the inward consciousness and general experience of mankind. The introduction of sin into the world, by the eating of the forbidden fruit, is well described by our great epic poet, as having

"Brought death into our world ; and all our woe."

An awful line ; and how full of the saddest and most melancholy meaning, the impressive and comprehensive words, "all our woe." In how many hearts do the words vibrate in most dolorous sounds. But what imagination can grasp the mighty conception, or fathom the depth of meaning, contained in the words, "all our woe !" As it would be impossible to collect into one great reservoir all the tears that humanity has ever shed, or concentrate into one heart-rending wail all man's

expressions of anguish, so it is impossible for the mind fully to grasp the overwhelming idea, "all our woe." It is, however, true, that "*each* heart knows its *own* bitterness." And all need, and desire consolation. But where is it to be found? "Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it to be found in the land of the living. The depth saith, it is not in me: and the sea saith, it is not in me. It cannot be gotten for gold; neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of gold. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls, for the price of it is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it; neither shall it be valued with pure gold."

The question is one that man asks in solemn earnest; *where* is consolation to be found? Man wants that which will not merely *divert*, but *console* and *sustain* his mind, amid all the evils and sorrows that "flesh is heir to." We can no more evade sorrow, than escape from ourselves. It meets us in every "lane of life." It assails us in society; and accompanies us into solitude. Its sombre countenance looks out upon us in the gayest company; and forces itself on our attention, when mixing up with, and gazing upon, the most charming scenes. It falls upon the soul, at times, with as much

apparent gentleness as the dew ; but how strong is its power even then ! At other times, its sound is as the noisy wind, or the roaring sea. It sometimes comes as a storm that threatens to destroy us, and which carries away the delight of our eyes at a stroke. Our dear friend wastes away ; yea, he gives up the ghost, and where is he ? “ Who has not lost a friend ? ” Sometimes sorrow seizes hold of the soul “ as an armed man ; ” laying us prostrate under its powerful grasp. Although its source is often without, not unfrequently it is from within us. Our sins, the consciousness of guilt, the dread of future wrath, the thought of an offended God, anticipations of our final doom, often spread a dark influence over the soul. Ah ! it is a conviction of our sinfulness, and a dread of punishment—forebodings arising from within—that throw a gloom over outward things. It is sin that has separated between us and God, and peace. We are unhappy because we are unholy. We suffer because we have sinned. We dread the future because of the present guilt. It is often not so much from the storms raging without us, as from the fearful state of wickedness within that our unhappiness springs. The fountain is within, from whence the bitter streams often rise. No remedy, therefore, that leaves the heart untouched, that effects no cure in the man himself, will be of any avail in affording real and permanent consolation.

“ If happiness have not her seat
And centre in the breast ;
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest.”

We are kept in bondage through fear of death. We sigh because conscience condemns, and God frowns. All light proceeding not from the “Sun of Righteousness,” will be as unavailing for the wants of the soul, as artificial lamps would be for supplying the place of the bright “orb of day.”

The private history of the most gifted men, overtaken by the bereavements and sorrow of life, when strangers to the gospel, proves the inadequacy of earthly things to heal the wounds, and soothe the sorrows of the soul. Many of these men have sunk down into the most hopeless despondency—not a few have died of a broken heart—some have sought relief in vice—and many, alas ! in suicide. That life is a “battle,” a “trial,” a “vale of tears,” we need not further attempt to prove. No doubt, the reader could add his own testimony to the “great cloud of witnesses,” which have proclaimed that man is subject to sorrow. Without being mawkish or sentimental—without ignoring the various sources of earthly bliss, that are open to us—we may still say, and that without contradiction—

“This world is a sorrowful stage,
A valley of weeping and woe ;
From youth unto tremulous age,
The tear uninvited will flow.”

The great question coming up from the hearts of the thronging thousands around us is, "Who will show us any good?" To each trembling and sorrowful reader, we say, "Fear not, for behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy." The Gospel is a Divine source of consolation. If nowhere else in this world, there *is* "consolation in Christ," there is "balm in Gilead." Perhaps this distinguishing feature of the Gospel has not been sufficiently dwelt upon by its advocates. In our zeal for orthodoxy, our horror at any departure from a certain time-honoured mode of presenting and illustrating certain portions of "the truth" we have lost sight of its most distinguishing and winning characteristic. It is good news. It is glad tidings. It comes to man, not as an angel of terror; but it comes, breathing a spirit of love, addressing him in the words of kindness. The most truthful delineation of the life of its Author is given in these memorable words, "*He went about doing good.*" The most prominent feature in His lovely character is, compassion. His gentle words as they fall on our ears, salute them as the softest music. How beautifully He begins His most admirable Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." What heart has never been moved by the parables of the "Good Samaritan," and the "Prodigal Son?" Who has ever read, when serious, with a

heart unmoved, that sweet invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." What little child, what full grown man ever stood, in thought, near the cross where Jesus died, and with an unmoved heart, listened to His dying cry, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do." Who has ever read the closing chapter of St. John's Gospel, without being ashamed of his coldness toward, or opposition to, Christ. We cannot dwell on His intercourse with His sorrowful disciples on the "night in which He was betrayed," without seeing how eminently He was able "to comfort all that mourn." We picture to our minds His parting with His disciples on the Mount of Galilee. It was a beautiful sight to see Jesus "gazing up into heaven." His hands are uplifted in blessing—His eyes looking now to His Father and our Father, to His God and our God—and then on those whom He is leaving in the wilderness. Christ began His Sermon on the Mount, by saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit"—and He spent the last few moments of His stay on earth, in blessing His disciples; "and as He blessed them, He was parted from them, and a cloud received Him out of their sight." The first and last accents of His official voice were accents of blessing. And is it too much to say, that the blessing with which He blessed His followers then, was like a mountain-rill, that rolls on through many lands, till it becomes a glorious

river, "the streams whereof make glad the city of God." His Church has ever since been watered by that stream. And on it will roll for ever. The bed of this river will never be dry. The Gospel—His letter of love to the world—is, at the same time, "the Gospel of our salvation," and the Gospel of consolation.

Let us look at some features of the Gospel, which prove and illustrate this. The Gospel is a revelation of God. It is so in the *teachings* of Jesus. It is pre-eminently so in the life of Jesus. He is "God manifested in the flesh." He is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person. His teachings of God are cheering. He tells us to pray to God as, "Our Father." And what heart does not feel the joyousness of the instruction? He shows us the Father in all His own fulness of love and exuberance of compassion. One of the twelve said once to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father, and it *sufficeth* us." It will be enough if we see the Father. It is what the heart of man wants—a Father. "Jesus said unto him, Have I been so long with you and yet hast thou not *known me*, Philip! He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In His mildness and dignity—His majesty and mercy—his authority and compassionate tenderness—He reveals to us the heart of our Father who is in heaven. We are not orphans. We have a Father, and such a Father! What heart can

require more, when such a Father is revealed to him.

The Gospel contains many most beautiful illustrations of the doctrine of Providence. These illustrations are not contained in abstract propositions, or laboured arguments. These the masses could not appreciate. But they are presented in the most simple, most telling language. We are told that the Divine care extends to the meanest creatures and the minutest objects. "Behold the fowls of the air ; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin ; And yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you." These illustrations are as beautifully simple as they are encouraging. He who "spake as never man spoke," thus entwines around the flowers of the field, and causes to be sung by the birds of the air, the Fatherly care of Jehovah towards us. "Even the hairs of your head are all numbered." Where else are such consoling truths to be learned ? "To whom shall we go?" but unto Him who hath "the words of eternal life."

But man feels he is a sinner. He needs a Saviour.

He is guilty and needs pardon. He is unholy and needs purification. Pardon and Regeneration are the two great wants of the human soul. These most pressing and important wants are abundantly provided for in "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." The Gospel is epitomised in certain brief and interesting sentences. Its distinguishing truths are proclaimed in the following texts: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish: but have everlasting life." "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." "In the fulness of time God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." "Who gave Himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." In these short texts—samples of multitudes more—pardon and regeneration are taught and made known. God reveals Himself "in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." The deep wants of the soul are provided for. Man may become one with God the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Ghost. Through Jesus we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Here

is consolation indeed ! The great load of guilt may be removed. The plague may be cured. Sin, which has separated between us and God, is atoned for. This is indeed "glad tidings of great joy." The most important question is answered. And "he that will come, may come and partake of the water of life freely."

" Salvation in His name is found,
Balm of my grief and care ;
A medicine for my every wound,
All, all I want is there."

Having such a High Priest, we can now come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy ; and find grace to help in time of need. Here He hath given us "everlasting consolation, and a good hope through grace." We are assured that "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

" Jesus, the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease ;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace."

But man is mortal. He must needs die. And the question has arisen in all ages—Will the living, thinking principle in man exist for ever ! Is he, or is he not, immortal ? Much speculation has been indulged in on this subject, and many erroneous notions have been propagated about it. But where the light of the Gospel has not shined, man has

never arrived at certainty and satisfaction. It has often been a matter of speculation and anxious thought ; but never of certainty and calm faith. How affecting, beautiful, and mournfully plaintive, are the words which the Emperor Adrian addressed to his soul, as he stood trembling on the borders of the invisible world !

“ Poor little trembling, fluttering thing,
Must we no longer live together ;
And dost thou prune thy trembling wing—
To take thy flight—thou knowest not whither ?

“ Thy pleasing vein, thy humorous folly,
Lies all neglected—all forgot
And pensive, wavering, melancholy,
Thou hops't and fear'st, thou know'st not what.”

These touching words may be regarded as a fair sample of the earnest and thoughtful heathens in all ages of the world. For there *have been* thoughtful men in all lands, in all ages. The great problems of life and immortality have forced themselves on the attention of man with the most solemn power. Man has looked upward, and inward, and forward, and has longed for some one to tell him if he should live for ever—and if so, *where* ? A most affecting illustration of this occurred in India some time ago. A man who was about to die sent for a Brahmin, and asked him, with great solemnity, “Where will my soul go to when it leaves the body ?” He answered, “Into another body.” “Where,” said the man, with increasing earnest-

ness, "will it go when that body dies?" "Into another body," answered the poor deluded priest. "Where then?" said the dying man. The answer again was, "Into another body." The mind of the poor man then darted across the period of time that would elapse between the death of these various bodies, and knowing that they would each die—he inquired with all the solemnity and agony of a dying man—"But where will it go to last of all?" And trembling, with the question unanswered on his lips, he expired. Ah! my readers, we all want to know, *where* it will go to last of all. Well, here the Gospel comes in to our aid. The hand that was nailed to the tree tears aside the veil from the future world. "Life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel." The future destinies and immortality of the soul are made known. Important light is thrown on the future state. While we are told of a world of darkness—"outer darkness"—as the abode and final home of the wicked—we are taught that he that embraces and obeys the Gospel, that trusts in Jesus and follows Him, shall find another world, another home. A world of brightness, of repose, and of joy. "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." While much of future blessedness remains to be unfolded hereafter; "while it doth not yet appear what we shall be," we know that "when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." The path to that glorious world

is marked out. Of the character conferring on us "a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light," we have ample information. The most unlettered Christian is wiser on these matters than the most intelligent heathen, or the most learned sceptic. Even Socrates said, he knew not whether it was best to live or die. The acute and philosophic sceptic Hobbes said, when dying, "I am taking a leap in the dark." Whereas a poor collier, who received a wound in the pit, of which he died, as soon as he reached the pit's mouth, said to his wife, who had come to see him, "My dear, *there is light in the valley.*"

Thus the Gospel reveals what the human mind could not discover, and yet longed, and needed to know—the doctrine of immortality and the character of man's future home. Man thus learns that he is the object of the Divine care; that he derived his being from God, and at death will return to him. He is capable of, and called to, high and holy fellowship with God here, and still higher and holier fellowship with him hereafter. Amidst his sorrows he may unbosom his soul to his "Heavenly Father," and when in the darkness of death he can derive light from the Eternal Sun. The gloomy valley becomes beautifully irradiated. And while he treads the solemn path, he can calmly and firmly say, "I will fear no evil, for *Thou* art with me." Thus he neither treads the path alone, nor in darkness. He has company and he has light. The

light of Divine truth and love shines on his soul, and he leans on the arm of his Beloved. No other system has afforded, or *can* afford, such consolation. In Athens—"the eye of Greece"—there was found an altar with *this* inscription, "*To the Unknown God.*" The Athenians were equally ignorant of man's immortality. So that when Paul spoke to them of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, and others said, "We will hear thee again on this matter." And yet man cannot be happy while ignorant of "Jesus and the resurrection."

We need the doctrine of immortality and "a good hope through grace," to console our minds amidst the sorrows of life, and the pains of death; and we need some information on the doctrine of the resurrection, to soothe and sustain the mind under bereavement. The affectionate interest of the heart in our dear children or other loved ones, does not die with them. We not only follow all that is mortal to the house appointed for all living, we think of the soul, and follow it into the world of spirits. We wonder as to its blessedness, and are cheered with the belief thereof; we wonder, too, whether "the beautiful clay" will ever be reanimated, and while religion heightens and refines the sensibilities of our common nature, it affords in its doctrines of immortality and the resurrection a solace for the mourning soul, and a balm for the wounded heart. Let man follow to "the cold grave" the child of his heart—the partner of

his bosom—while he is a stranger to God, and destitute of faith in the doctrines under consideration. Let him have no faith in Divine Providence—let him be a practical stranger to the doctrine of reconciliation—let him have no settled faith in immortality and the resurrection, how his heart bleeds! It needs, greatly needs, and looks round for consolation. But it finds it not. That arm on which he leaned—that bosom in which he could once confide—has been laid prostrate by the last enemy. He feels himself alone in the world, with a sad heart that nothing can heal or cheer. We are not exaggerating. We are not over-stating the truth. We have a case in point. Lord Jeffery, the celebrated editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, was called to endure, after several years of happy union, the lamented death of an amiable wife. His grief was deep and sincere, as his loss was great; and what was most painful, it was, according to his own published statement, *unmitigated*. To his brother, who was, in the order of Providence, called upon sometime after, to experience a similar bereavement, he wrote to say, that, had he himself found anything to alleviate his suffering under the painful trial he would have felt a great pleasure in telling him of it. But, said he, “*I did not.*” He thus felt what it was to “sorrow without hope.” While this is a melancholy, it is, at the same time, an instructive occurrence. The writer is acquainted with one who was called to experience a similar

bereavement, after a union equally happy. Around that object his tenderest, and earliest affections had been entwined. His affection was, perhaps, not less intense than that of Jeffery. His heart was not less sensitive, nor was he less conscious of the greatness of his loss. As he stood by the open grave that was about to receive the youthful and amiable partner of his joys and sorrows—feeling what none can understand but those who have been placed in similar circumstances—he saw engraved on a tombstone just by his dear wife's grave, these consoling words, "*Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*" He knew that his wife, whom he was sorrowfully interring, slept in Jesus. His mind at once flew away on the wings of holy faith to the morning of the resurrection. He proved the power of faith to bring the "distant near." He felt its power to console. And being himself a believer in "Jesus and the power of His resurrection," having, through mercy, been "reconciled to God," he was enabled to embrace, in faith and hope, the awakened saint that had just "fallen asleep." He "sorrowed not as those who are without hope." And in the darkest night, and most painful day, the doctrines of Christianity were a pillow on which his aching head could lean—a cordial to soothe his bleeding heart—a balm to heal his wounded soul. The assurance of the happiness of her whose loss he sincerely mourned—the *certainty* of a reunion in a holier, happier clime, where "there is no more

death, neither sorrow nor sighing"—not only sustained and consoled, but often *cheered*, his down-cast mind. Such, indeed, was the power of the Gospel to bless, that he could not but thank God, painful as his trial was, for bringing him into circumstances in which he could so remarkably prove the superlative adaptation of the Gospel for meeting the wants of the human mind. This is not fanaticism. And if it were, the world has nothing to equal it in comforting those that are cast down. But it is truth—blessed truth. The Creator of the mind is the author of the Gospel. And as He has adapted the ear for receiving sound, and the eye for the reception of light, so He has established a beautiful connection between the truths of the Gospel and the wants of the soul.

The Gospel, then, is a system of consolation ; and the night of human sorrow cannot be so dark as to hide its stars. Its promises shine out in the moral firmament with cheering brightness. The cup of human woe cannot be so bitter as to destroy its sweetening power. Our burden cannot be so heavy as to nullify its ability to give us rest. The wounds of humanity cannot be so numerous or so inveterate as to baffle the skill of the great Physician. The Gospel is the poor man's wealth, the sick man's cure, the consolation of the sorrowful, the guilty man's pardon, the fountain in which the polluted may wash, and the lamp which, if a man carry in his hand, will enable him to say, "There is light in

the valley." It gives us "power to become the sons of God." It assures us that Jesus is our elder Brother—our Saviour and our Friend. And it tells us that the Holy Ghost is emphatically "*The Comforter*." It turns the ordinary and extraordinary trials and sorrows of life into means of personal purification and spiritual advancement. It is the philosopher's stone changing all that it touches into gold. Who would not then embrace and love it? And having embraced it, who would renounce it for the dreams of the pantheist, the doubts of the sceptic, or the negations—the cold and sterile negations—of the atheist? No! reader, no! We will "*not*" sell our birthright for a mess of pottage. We will *not* relinquish the hope for which martyrs have bled, confessors suffered, reformers toiled, and that has been bought "by the holiest blood in the universe," and which hope, "when dying, none ever regretted having embraced and loved." But—

"Should all the forms which men devise
Assault my faith with treacherous art,
I'd call them vanity and lies,
And bind the Gospel to my heart."

SPIRITUAL DEPRESSION.

"Are the consolations of God small with thee? is there any secret thing with thee?"—ELIPHAZ.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?"—DAVID.

"Where is then the blessedness ye spoke of?"—PAUL.

NOTHING is clearer, from the teachings of the Bible, than that God has made abundant provision for alleviating the sorrows of humanity. "His children shall have a place of refuge." "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." It is revealed, as the Divine will, that we, as Christians, may "have a *strong consolation*, having fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." In this hope, says Peter—"to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia"—"ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." The

specific promises of sterling worth and beauty in the Divine word are innumerable, and fraught with the richest consolation. So also are its authoritative teachings of God, Providence, and the doctrines of Redemption, Immortality, and the Resurrection. The well-known and oft-repeated designation of the Holy Spirit—whose constant and abiding presence is promised to the faithful—is the *Comforter*. He bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. He seals unto the day of redemption. He gives the “earnest of our inheritance ;” or as one renders it, “a payment to account.” He aids us in prayer. And “when the enemy cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifteth up a standard against him.” Hereby we are assured of our sonship. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” If *any* are happy, *true Christians* are. A river of bliss ever rolls at their feet. An atmosphere of Divine love and consolation ever surrounds them. A sky overshadows them, which, if not always cloudless, contains a glorious sun—“the Sun of Righteousness.” And when clouds gather over our heads, of black and threatening gloom, we often see therein “the bow of promise,” and are assured that—

“The clouds we so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on our head.”

In the Book whose "every word of grace is strong, as that which built the skies," we read that, "All things work together for good to them that love God." On our pilgrimage we have glorious attendants; "angels our servants are," and Heaven is looming before us at the end of our journey. We remember, and look back on the past, and on every page of our history we see written "goodness and mercy." Nor are some of us strangers to the truthfulness of the following lines:—

"Better than my boding fears,
To me Thou oft has proved,
Oft observed my silent tears,
And challenged thy beloved ;
Mercy to my rescue flew,
And Death ungrasp'd his fainting prey,
Pain before Thy face withdrew,
And sorrow fled away."

Have not our greatest trials often turned out to be our greatest blessings? enabling us to adopt the beautiful language of Dr. Young—

"Among my list of blessing infinite,
Stands this the foremost,
That my heart has bled.
For all I bless Thee, most for the severe."

Such are some of the views presented in the Word of God, and the ample volume of Christian experience, on the "Consolations of God." How *happens it*, then, that the consolations of God are "*small*" with many of the followers of Jesus? It

cannot be because their sources are few or inadequate. The "wells of salvation" are ever well supplied. The "streams of grace" are ever freely flowing. In the firmament of God's spiritual heavens, the stars are ever shining. The bosom of our Father in heaven ever glows with love towards us. "The throne of grace is ever accessible." The eye of faith may be "looking unto Jesus." Hope may cast its anchor "within the veil." Faith may grasp the promises. Patience may both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God. We may prove that *as* our day is, *so* shall our strength be. We may, we ought to lay hold of the Divine word; "for He is faithful that hath promised." It cannot be, then, for want of suitable truths to repose upon, that Christians are "cast down" and "in heaviness."

Let us, then, inquire, What *are* the most common sources of Spiritual Depression?

1. There are seasons when there is a "needs be" that we are "in heaviness," when there has not been moral delinquency on our part; when

"Cares like a wild deluge come,
And storms of sorrow fall;"

when disappointment succeeds disappointment, loss follows loss, and temptation rapidly treads on the heels of temptation; these things may occasion spiritual depression. "No chastening for the *present* seemeth to be joyous, but grievous." Our trials *would not be such* if we did not feel them. Religion

does not make us stoical. Christians are men, not machines, or stones. God *intends* us to feel. The loss of our property, the failure of our confidants, the death of our friends, the darkness of our prospects, and the assaults of the "enemy," will make us feel our weakness and dependence; and no wonder if at times these trials produce spiritual despondence. Affliction may, and often does, so influence the frame "so fearfully and wonderfully made," as to shake and lay prostrate the nervous system; and by the mysterious, but active influence of the nerves, on our spiritual nature, despondency is produced. We sincerely believe that there are upright and conscientious Christians, "who hang down their heads like bulrushes," who "write bitter things against themselves," when they might and ought to encourage themselves in the Lord. To these we would "speak comfortably." Jesus sympathises with them; for He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." If we only better understood the mechanism of our own frames, the connection and sympathy between the body and the mind, we should no doubt be often able to account, on natural principles, for the heaviness felt by the pious. Job's plaintive and melancholy utterances were, many of them, may be most of them, the natural expressions of a nature stung with anguish, and laid prostrate by overwhelming calamity. But alas for him! many of the distinguishing truths which are the common heritage of the devout in

these last times, were unknown to him, in that gray dawn of Divine revelation. Who can read, without deep sympathy, the following fine but mournful effusion? "Even to-day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning. Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat! I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would say unto me. Will He plead against me with His great power? No! but He would put strength in me. There the righteous might dispute with Him; so that I should be delivered for ever from my judge. Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him: on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him: He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him: but *He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*" Here, while the good man seeks to find the Lord, desires to bring his cause into God's immediate presence, and groans under his tremendous load; he yet calmly stays himself 'on the Divine goodness, and waits in quiet confidence the issue. Let the sincerely pious do the same, however painfully they may be tried. "The expectation of the righteous shall not be cut off." The process of trial is painful, but the result will be satisfactory, if we only *wait*. "For it is good for a man that he both

hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God." Our sufferings are part of a great comprehensive scheme, the issues of which run "on into eternity." The scheme, if laid before us, could not be grasped and comprehended by our feeble faculties. It may indeed seem to us, in our present state, confusion; but it accords with Divine order. We are not required to master the intricacies of the plan. But we know *who designed* it. We know also *who superintends* it; and are assured what the final result will be, if we only abide faithful. The gold will lose its dross. It will become refined, and "be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Being assured of these things, and "knowing of whom we have learned them," we can "bide our time." "The just shall live by faith."

2. The inquiry at the head of this chapter, though it was unkind and uncharitable in its application to Job, contains a deeply significant intimation of the reason why "the consolations of God" are not unfrequently "small" with us. Is there *any secret thing* with thee? There may be hid in the recesses of our own hearts a "secret thing," which if brought out of its hiding-place, and exposed to the light of day, would account for our spiritual depression. "*Why* art thou cast down, O my soul? and *why* art thou disquieted within me?" "Is there not a *cause*?" The hue of spiritual health mantles not on the cheek as it was wont to

do. The pulse beats not in the strong and regular manner as formerly. The streams of spiritual consolation flow not into the soul as they once did. And why? What has stopped up the channel? Some have to say, "I remember the time when it was otherwise with me."

"What peaceful hours I then enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still;
But now I find an aching void
The world can never fill."

As it would be impossible to promote the healthiness of a plant if a worm were gnawing its roots, so it will be equally useless to attempt to apply spiritual consolation to those with whom there is some "secret thing" lodging. The stream will not flow freely until the channel is re-opened and cleared. It is not always safe and wise to administer cordials to the ailing. They often require that which will cleanse and purify the system. We ought not to heal our moral wounds "lightly." It is often safer to probe them to the bottom. Then, a sound cure may be effected. As our highest happiness depends on both our external and internal conformity to the Divine will, let us be willing to examine our own hearts and lives. Let us remember that spiritual sickness comes not without a cause; spiritual depression is not a matter of accident, although its cause may not lie on the surface. But assuredly there *is* a cause, for God does not capriciously hide His face. He has

no pleasure in withholding from His children a sense of His favour. You are not less happy to-day than yesterday, because God loves you less now than then : He is the same

“ Faithful, unchangeable friend,
Whose love is as great as his power,
And neither knows measure nor end.”

His promises still fill the Holy Book, and his Holy Spirit is as much the Comforter now as ever. How happens it, then, that you are depressed? Do you desire to know and remove the cause? Then “examine yourselves!” Look into your own hearts. Inquire into your own conduct, and the motives and principles from which that conduct springs. Humbly and sincerely seek the Divine aid in the important work. In solemn and profound sincerity, kneel before the Searcher of hearts, and earnestly pray, “Search me, O God, and know my heart! try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Let your heart go out in prayer to Him, saying—

“ The dearest idol I have known,
Whate’er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only Thee.”

If we shrink from this ordeal, we have cause for *alarm*. Let us then be honest with our own hearts,

and inquire, "Is there in the deep and hidden recesses of the soul, a secret worm gnawing at the roots of our spiritual being? Is there some practice indulged in that we would blush to be made known to our neighbour? Is there some besetting sin that is secretly practised? Have we hid, as Achan did, something that God has forbidden? If so, let us uncover the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold. Is the internal feeling out of harmony with the external conduct? Is the *heart not right with God*? It is important that we remember that it was a divinely inspired man who said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." In describing the truly happy, Jesus said, "Blessed are the *pure in heart*." The Saviour came to "save His people from their sins, to redeem them from all iniquity." The Divine injunction is, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Hence our prayer should be—

"Thy nature be my law,
Thy spotless sanctity;
And sweetly every moment draw
My happy soul to Thee."

It is our iniquity that separates between us and our God. Let all sin be put away. Let there be an entire surrender of our whole selves to God. Let the soul rest itself fully on Jesus; let faith's hand cling alone and entirely to Him; let me believe in Him, as my Saviour, my present, able, loving Saviour.

“Then I shall read my title clear
To mansions in the sky ;
And bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eye.”

3. Another cause of spiritual depression is, *want of purity and loftiness in our aims.*

Happiness is what we each desire, but none of us shall find it if we seek it as an *end*. Our object and aim should be to please “God which trieth the heart.”

Are we seeking consolation for ourselves, when we ought to be inquiring into the will of God, that we may do it? His will made known in His word, and intimated by His Providence, should be our rule of duty. Our ambition should be to secure His approving “Well done.” If duty has been omitted; if we have failed where we might have succeeded; if we have sought our own ease and gratification when we should have been aiming to promote the welfare of others, and the glory of God; if we have sought to live to ourselves, and coldly said, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”—no wonder if our cry is, “my leanness, my leanness!” “There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.” He will be a stranger to the high and pure enjoyments of “the man of God,” who liveth as “a man of the world.” Religion is not a license to selfishness. It is not merely securing our own salvation. It is intended to bring

us out of ourselves unto God, and into the steady and even path of duty. A person may seek relief by cordials, who would act more wisely if he sought it in manly toil. It is not to nourish hot-house plants that Divine grace is given. Our *strength* and our *comfort* too would be greatly augmented by active service. If we acted on noble, generous, and unselfish principles, we should much less frequently find the consolations of God "small" with us. If we would claim the glorious promises granted to the saints of yore, we must imbibe their spirit, and walk in their steps. "Be not slothful, but followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." We must learn to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." We must "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." We must not be "conformed to this world, but transformed," if we would "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." A man seeking the consolations of God with a closed hand—a closed purse—a narrow soul—a mind centred on himself, and seeking only to be happy, is a miserable creature, that we know not whether most to pity or to despise. The Gospel is designed to develop all that is lovely and of good report—"if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, Christians should think on these things." We are the followers of Him "who pleased not himself"—who "came to seek and to save that *which was lost*," and one of whose many beautiful

sayings is, "It is more blessed to *give* than to *receive*."

4. Another cause of spiritual depression is, *a want of submission to the Divine will.*

There are some to whom active service is a pleasure, while passive service is most difficult. To be laid aside—to feel bodily incapacity—to suffer continuous debility, is far from being an easy task for persons of an active habit. But Providence not unfrequently calls upon Christians to exhibit the excellency of religion by its power to produce meek acquiescence in the will of God in seasons of suffering. But the hearts of many rise in rebellion under these circumstances. Their health, their property, their children, they regard as their own. And when these are recalled by Jehovah, they do not, as they ought, say, "Good is the will of the Lord." The example of Job is dignified and beautiful when he had sustained the loss of family and property. There is a never-failing freshness in the narrative of his conduct, as related by the inspired writer. After the last messenger had delivered his mournful tidings, "Then Job arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped; and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord." David submissively said on the death of his child, "*I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*"

But Jacob said, "Joseph is not, Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away also. All these things are against me." How many are there who imitate the example of Jacob, greatly as he was mistaken ! There are some whom a mysterious but gracious Providence visits with bereavement, who are years ere they learn the important lesson of submission to God. They indulge in hard and rebellious thoughts of Him. They will not believe that He has dealt kindly with them. Some even give *utterance* to their rebelliousness of will in reference to Him. I remember hearing a person say, who had been a widow for four or five years, that she had never felt or thought in all that time that God had done right in smiting down the dear arm on which she once had so happily leaned. There was a hardness in her mode of speaking, and in the expression of her countenance, that made me shudder. A feeble worm remaining for so many years "under the rod," and all that while still standing out against Him ! But there are, I fear, too many with similar feelings, though some refuse to express them in the same manner. I had a dear and esteemed friend whom it took seven long years to learn the lesson of saying to God, "Thy will be done," after a similar bereavement. The persons to whom I allude were not ignorant, nor were they entire strangers to the fear of God. But their hearts had a solemn quarrel with their Maker. They arraigned at the *tribunal of their own feeble and erring judg-*

ment the doings of Him who is "wise in counsel, and excellent in working." The influence on the one seemed a hardening, and on the other a mournfully melancholy and depressing one. But on both it prevented the enjoyment of religious consolation. The heart was not at peace—the soul could not be happy while it had not learned the important lesson of submission to God. But in reference to one, at least, that lesson was at length learned, and peace and inward comfort were the happy result. I remember entering his lonely house one morning, when he said, with deep emotion, "I have good news to tell you this morning." He paused a moment, and then added, "No, I think I will tell you some other time." I said, "You have excited my curiosity and interest, and if agreeable, I should like to hear it now. I shall have pleasure in rejoicing with you, if I know the cause of your happiness." It cost him an effort to tell me, as it woke up the memory of seven years of mournful sorrow and gloom. At length he said, "I was thinking about the past and the future last night, as I sat alone in my house; and I said to myself, 'I have never truly given up to God what He saw it wise and right to take from me, now seven years ago. I felt it was very wrong. I knelt down before God, and earnestly asked Him to help me to submit my heart and will to Him. No sooner was I enabled to do so ere I felt His peaceful smile to beam upon me, and now I am happy.'"

It was a gladly solemn moment, and we mingled our tears of joy with each other. The gloom of years was gone. The mind regained peace and holy joy. My dear friend was once more happy. The cause of his spiritual gloom was removed, and a calm and holy joy pervaded his soul. But what a pity that it should have taken him seven long years to learn to obey the injunction, "Submit yourselves therefore to God;" "Be still, and know that I am God." He has since died *in peace*.

It is important that we remember to *whom* it is that we are required to submit ourselves. It is to God, the wise and holy Governor of the universe. "He doeth whatsoever He will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?" "He giveth no account of any of His matters." But deeply mysterious as are some of His dispensations, all that He does is in holy harmony with unerring wisdom and unfailing love. "Clouds and darkness are round about His throne, but righteousness and judgment are the habitation thereof." We are called to bow in humble submission before the throne of Him "whose nature and whose name is love." He is our kind and loving Father, and "He doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men." He chastens in love, and *because* He loves. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." Nothing is more displeasing to God *than the insubordination of the human*

will. And when His chastisements, instead of producing "the peaceable fruits of righteousness," lead us to murmur, as if we were dealt hardly with, we grieve the Holy One of Israel. Darkness is thus brought into our souls, and the consolations of God are small with us. But if we are submissive—if our will bows to the will of Jehovah—no trial, however painful, shall injure us; no loss, however great, shall be accompanied by the loss of spiritual consolation. What calm dignity, and beautiful and manly piety there is in Milton's sonnet on his blindness; the closing lines of which I must be allowed to quote:—

"God doth not need

Either man's work, or His own gifts ; *who best*
Bear HIS MILD YOKE, they serve Him best : His state
 Is kingly : thousands at His bidding speed,
 And post o'er land and ocean without rest ;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

And with what a mild and holy light the submission of Jesus shone out on "that night in which He was betrayed!" "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; but if not, Thy will be done. The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Submission was a lesson in which He became a proficient who in early youth sat at the feet of Gamaliel. He was not more remarkable for His fervent toil and ardent courage than for His meek submission. The following are the words of Paul, *who was* "in labours more abundant," and *who,*

“from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum, fully preached the Gospel of Christ.” “I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased and how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Oh for such a spirit as His! Had we such self-abnegation as He had, such willingness either to work or suffer as He had—such self-consecratedness of soul to God as He possessed; then, if “the sufferings of Christ” abounded in us, our consolations would also abound.

I will not enlarge on the *spirit of envy*, or the *want of a spirit of forgiveness*, as causes of spiritual depression. I might do so. But they seem so mean, so unworthy a man, much less a Christian, that I will not suppose that any who may read these pages will harbour such vipers in their bosoms. Should they do so, they need not wonder that the consolations of God are “small” with *them*. The Spirit of holiness and love will not take up His abode in their hearts. How often have such dispositions rudely driven away from the soul the “Heavenly Dove!”

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SPIRITUAL DEPRESSION.

(Continued.)

"Be not conformed to this world ; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."—PAUL.

"Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High ; and call upon me in the day of trouble : I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."—DAVID.

"Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? *let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.*"—ISAIAH.

IN the former part of this article, I have endeavoured to point out, as causes of spiritual depression : First, varied and long-continued trial and sorrow, producing a deeply depressing influence on the nervous system, leading the mind to look with a diseased eye, and through a perverted medium, on everything around us, especially in its relation to ourselves ; and constraining the soul to indulge in gloomy thoughts of the providential and spiritual dealings of Almighty God. Second, the indulgence of some "secret thing" of a sinful character, that like a worm at the root of a plant, prevents its healthy growth. Third, a want of purity and loftiness in our aims. Fourth, a want *of submission* to God.

I now proceed to endeavour to point out some other causes of the unhappy state of mind into which too many allow themselves to fall, in the hope that, while the indulgent reader accompanies me, he will deal honestly with his *own case*; and seek not only to *find out*, but to *remove* the cause of spiritual depression.

5. Another cause of spiritual depression is *worldly-mindedness*: *Having the heart set on "the things which are seen."* "My people have committed two evils—they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewn out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Perhaps more lose their spiritual comfort amid "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches," than in the "house of mourning," or on the "bed of languishing." Some persons, when they wax fat, kick like Jeshurun of old. Alas! how many persons have allowed their religious devotedness and spiritual happiness to decline as their riches have increased. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." Wealth, which men seek with the greatest ardour, and hold with the firmest grasp, is not most favourable to the progress of their spirituality.

The inordinate love of worldly good is to many the occasion of spiritual declension and depression. And yet they cannot understand the cause of their spiritual barrenness. Their gold has blinded their eyes. They are in darkness; and no wonder,

seeing that their souls are tied up in a money bag. They are spiritually feeble and comfortless; nor can they be anything else. God does not love a contracted heart; He does not dwell in a worldly soul. His reign cannot be divided; His empire cannot be shared with Mammon. *Are the consolations of God small with thee?* They may well be so, when your first and principal thoughts are of the world, and its gains and pleasures. It is my wish to be as *faithful as sympathetic*. Strongly convinced that spirituality of mind is essential to genuine comfort, let me urge with all affection and earnestness the divine injunction, "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." There is piety and wisdom in the prayer of Agar—"Give me neither poverty nor riches; but feed me with food convenient for me." And is there not beauty and comfort in the exhortation of St. Paul—"Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus." Would not a constant cultivation of the spirit of these texts of holy writ tend materially to the promotion of spiritual health and happiness? Let us make a humble, earnest, and persevering endeavour to *cultivate this spirit*. Try, dear reader, to raise your

soul above the world. Be spiritually minded ; use this world as not abusing it ; let thoughts higher than those of mere worldly gain fill your mind ; let pursuits more noble and divine engross your soul. You will enjoy with a richer pleasure the other gifts of God, if you see His hand in them, and resolve to glorify Him in and by them. Come away, then, my brother, and climb the hill of *pious* pleasure. Look up to higher regions ; get nearer to God ; let Him be thy portion ; try to say and to feel the truth of David's words—"All my springs are in Thee."

6. *Another cause of spiritual depression is, our "restraining prayer before God."* Perhaps there is no one religious duty that is more often brought before us, both by precept, promise, and example, in the sacred Scriptures, than that of prayer. It is the divinely appointed means by which all spiritual blessings are received. If we would receive, we must ask ; if we would find, we must seek ; if we would have the "store" of religious light and comfort thrown open to us, we must *knock*. The measure of our spiritual power and comfort will be, other things being equal, in the ratio of our prayerfulness. He who restrains prayer voluntarily shuts himself out from those sacred joys and holy pleasures which the man of constant, deep, and earnest prayerfulness enjoys. How many lose sight of this, and in consequence "walk in darkness and have no light." We have distinct and

most encouraging assurances that the day of sorrow and trouble shall be rendered less dark and trying to the man of prayer. "Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High; and call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." The preparation for prayer here spoken of is exceeding important; *thankfulness*, and personal *consecratedness*. "Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High." Who has not abundant cause for thankfulness? In the day of darkness and sorrow it is well to look round and endeavour rightly to estimate the comforts still left to us. Things are never so bad but they might have been worse. The wreck of our comforts is never complete. Some mercies and blessings are always left, to remind us of the Divine kindness and care. Our minds may be so filled and occupied with our troubles, that we may forget to look at our remaining mercies. It is well when a friend is at hand kindly to remind us of them. It is better still when we remember to return thanks to God for them; as our cultivation of a grateful sense of them will be pleasing to God, and soothing in its influence on our own minds. "A thankful heart is a receiving heart." Gratitude for mercies now enjoyed will prepare us to pray for and for receiving other needed blessings. A review of the divine favours and kind dealings will encourage us to pray for *present deliverance* and help in the day of trouble.

It is unwise to fix our gaze so intently on the “*dark side of things*,” as to unfit us for gratefully recognising the many favours still remaining to us. Too many, we fear, sink down into dark despondency from this cause. A minister of the gospel, some years ago, was so much discouraged and cast down by a sense of his own unworthiness, and the pressure of his personal and official difficulties, that he was driven to resolve on retiring from the ministry altogether. He made known his purpose to “a mother in Israel,” who advised him, ere he carried it out, to shut himself up in his closet, and review the dealings of God toward him ; and wherever he *saw a mercy to praise Him for it*. He did so. And on looking upon his past history, and around on his present condition, for mercies and blessings as grounds for praise, he was astonished at their multitude and their magnitude. A crowd of unthought-of blessings soon filled his whole mental vision. He saw them start up with astonishing rapidity and variety, and very soon he could see nothing but favours and marks of divine kindness, he gave up his mind freely and thankfully to their influence ; and, borne up on the wings of pious and grateful contemplation and joy, he soon rose far above the region of the clouds and sorrows that had well-nigh overwhelmed him ; and from that day forward he never thought of giving up his work, but “he went on his way rejoicing.” His path *ever after was as “the shining light which shineth*

more and more unto the perfect day." This happened at an early period of his history. He never after that day looked behind him, but amid varied experience,

"He still bore up and steered right onward."

He became one of the most useful, as he was one of the most holy and untiringly laborious ministers, of his own or any other time. His name William Bramwell. Praise prepares for prayer; was and answered prayer should be succeeded by the same exercise. Praise aids the soul in arising toward God in prayer. And if the divine loving-kindnesses were thoughtfully reviewed, we should find abundant encouragement to ask in confidence for such deliverance and help in the "day of trouble," as would effectually remove all undue tendency to spiritual depression.

But not only is thankfulness, but *personal consecratedness*, an important preparation for prayer in the day of trouble. "Pay thy vows unto the Most High." Man does vow unto God. Sometimes those vows are *made* in the day of trouble. At other times trouble is sent to *remind* us of them, and lead us to their performance. The remembrance of unpaid vows often wakes up as trouble gathers around and falls upon us. Well, let us be honest with our own hearts, and our Father in heaven, and "perform unto the Lord our vows." And then with a heart devoutly cherishing a *grateful remembrance* of His loving-kindness and tender

mercies, and yielding itself up entirely to His service—"let us pray." "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee." The promise is absolute on the duty being rightly performed. God has two ways of delivering His people. He sometimes delivers them by removing the cause of their trouble; at others, by supporting them with special grace while in the midst thereof. Sometimes He totally extinguishes the fire, at others He takes away its power to burn. Sometimes He removes the load, while at others He strengthens us to bear it joyfully. In the case of the good king Hezekiah, both in the time of sickness, and when invaded by the proud king of Assyria, He answered his prayer by removing the cause of his trouble. He added many years to his life, and he caused the invading king to return to his own land in humiliation and disgrace, not even permitting him to shoot an arrow over the walls of Jerusalem. In the case of Paul, who "thrice besought the Lord" for the removal of the "thorn in the flesh," He delivered him by imparting special help, giving as His answer to prayer the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee." This was enough. Paul gladly carried his burden, "gloried in his infirmity," that the power of Christ might rest upon him. Now, my brethren, "call upon God in the day of trouble," with the assurance of deliverance; but do not dictate to Him *how* that deliverance is to come. *Come it will, either by the removal of the external*

cause, or by the special inward consolation and support of the mind in its midst.

The enemy is never more successful in effectually hindering the Christian's peace and spiritual progress than when he leads him to "restrain prayer before God." There have been those whom trouble has driven from God, instead of nearer to Him. Under the influence of nervous prostration and depression, there have been some who have been led to imagine and believe that it was wrong in them to pray, and that the Great Ear was shut against their cry. A man of deep and genuine piety and amiability, as well as great intelligence and genius, was visited with an affliction, the influence of which left on his mind an impression of this character. He believed that by a special decree of Jehovah it would be wrong in him to pray. He restrained prayer before God under this impression. He had sung in more healthy and happy days, when his nervous system was not deranged, or his views of the divine character clouded thereby—

"Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw ;
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw ;
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees."

But believing that the mercy-seat was no longer accessible to him, his voice was not heard as in former days to call upon God. His life was blameless and variously useful. He had a deep and *profoundly* awful reverence for God. He sought to

promote His glory and the welfare of man. He wrote hundreds of the most inimitably beautiful letters in our language, as well as many poems that the world will "not willingly let die." His memory is loved, and his name pronounced with admiring sympathy by millions, and yet his own soul was intensely unhappy; and while his last days were days of deep and awful gloom, his sun went down behind a cloud. His name was William Cowper.

It is well known, that poor dear Cowper's gloom rested on his soul until death. His last moments were clouded with the same look—despair. But after death, his countenance, until it was closed from view, "bore the expression of calmness and composure, mingled with holy surprise." It seems that his soul as it escaped from the prison-house of his diseased frame, and awoke to the sight of that smiling Saviour, through whose merits he is doubtless "gone home," felt a joyous surprise that he was "*not deserted*," and that feeling was flung back by the departing soul on the countenance of the sacred sufferer. Beautifully has Mrs. Browning expressed this idea in her admirable poem on "Cowper's Grave."

"Like a sick child that knoweth not
His mother while she blesses,
And drops upon his burning brow
The coolness of her kisses;
That turns his fevered eyes around—
'My mother, where's my mother?'
As if such tender words and looks
Could come from any other!"

“The fever gone, with leaps of heart,
 He sees her bending o’er him ;
 Her face all pale from watchful love,
 The unwearied love she bore him !
 Thus woke the poet from the dream
 His life-long fever gave him,
 Beneath those deep pathetic eyes,
 Which closed in death to save him !

“Thus ? Oh, not *thus* ! no type of earth
 Could image that awaking,
 Wherein he scarcely heard the chant
 Of seraphs, round him breaking,
 Or felt the new immortal throb,
 Of soul from body parted ;
 But *felt those eyes alone, and knew*
My Saviour ! not deserted !”

Could the dear unhappy and mysterious sufferer have been induced with holy constancy and hopefulness to pray, although he might never have been fully delivered while in this world, from the suffering arising from his unhappily constituted and seriously deranged nervous system, yet we doubt not some considerable alleviation would have been afforded him, and some moments of consoling peace would have come over his sorrowful mind. But he has gone where the last tear has been wiped from his eyes by a loving Father’s hand. Let no one who reads this book, however dark and gloomy may be his mind, and apparently hopeless his case, restrain prayer before God.

But allow me, in closing these remarks on the importance of not restraining prayer, to remind you *who said*, “Men ought *always* to pray, and not

faint;" and to commend to your thoughtful perusal the comment on this text of a dear living friend, whose tender and beautiful lines were never before in print, and who was with difficulty persuaded to consent to their appearance in print now. I hope that the Hearer of prayer will make the perusal of them a great blessing to many a reader of my "BOOK FOR THE SORROWFUL."

"Art thou in trouble, gloomy thy way?
Be not desponding; faint not, but pray.

"Do sore temptations fill with dismay?
Thou shalt o'ercome them; faint not, but pray.

"Are thy hopes blighted? thy friends far away?
Jesus is near thee; faint not, but pray.

"Art thou bereaved of thy earthly stay?
A FRIEND ever liveth; oh faint not, but pray.

"Has health departed? do joys decay?
God will give comfort; faint not, but pray.

"Doth darkness surround thee—not one bright ray?
The cloud will blow over; faint not but pray.

"*What'er the sorrows* marking thy way,
Be ever hopeful; and faint not, but *pray*.

"For Jesus hath promised strength for thy day—
He will be faithful; believe Him, and PRAY."

7. *The last cause of spiritual depression that I would name is unbelief.* Such is the importance of faith that salvation is attached to it. It is the condition on which we are saved. It is necessary at the commencement of the Christian's career; "For without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is;" and

that "He is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek Him." If justified, it is "by faith," and "God purifies the heart by faith." "He that believeth shall be saved." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Faith is the eye that looks to Christ, as the Israelites to the serpent of brass, and is saved. Faith is the hand that firmly grasps the promises, and thus "lays hold on eternal life." It is faith that gives vitality to the Christian's soul, and by which he retains his union with God. "For the just shall live by his faith." As it is feeble or strong, so is the Christian. Our consolations rise or fall with our faith. A vigorous faith sees "a silver lining to every cloud," and lives on healthily, through days and nights of darkest and sharpest trials. Faith says with Job, "Yea, though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Faith sings with the prophet, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Its language in the prison, with martyrdom before its possessor, is, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." Its joys and triumphs time would fail us to enumerate. But unbelief robs the soul of all *spiritual* joy. It puts out the Christian's eyes; it

enfeebles his arm ; it causes his knees to tremble ; it darkens his sky ; it casts a gloom over all his prospects ; it puts a wrong construction on all the providential dealings of God.

“ Blind unbelief is sure to err, and scan his work in vain.”

If it reads the promises, it claims them not ; and where its sway is felt, the consolations of God are sure to be “small.” Reader, would you enjoy spiritual comfort ? “Have faith in God.” Would you have “a strong consolation ?” let your faith be firm and unwavering. Say, “I will trust, and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song ; He also is become my salvation.” Look not at appearances. Look straight to the promises ; for He hath said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Faith says, I believe it. He hath said, “As thy day, so shall thy strength be.” Faith says, I believe it. He hath said, “All things work together for good to them that love God.” Faith says, I believe it. He hath said, “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.” Faith says, Amen. He that would be constantly happy, must have a constant faith. And he whose faith is constant, shall be saved from spiritual depression.

“ Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone ;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, It shall be done.”

THE RESURRECTION

ILLUSTRATED BY SPRING.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth."—JOB.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life."—JESUS.

"Them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."—PAUL.

THE doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is a distinguishing and glorious article of the Christian's creed. It is, especially under some circumstances, a source of much consolation and joy. Man's condition and prospects, so far as this world is concerned, are humiliating and gloomy. Every step he takes is one towards the grave. His frame, so "fearfully and wonderfully made," must decay. He "must needs die." Whatever be his position in society—however important he may regard himself, or be regarded by others—he must be brought to "death, and to the house appointed for all living." The most beautiful flowers fade, and the stoutest trees of the forest decay; so human beings, even though remarkable for beauty or strength, must fall under the pressure of mortality. The brightest eye, the most beautiful frame, the most admired of *human beings*, must say "to the worm, thou art my

companion, and to corruption, thou art my sister, and my mother." "The righteous perisheth." Those whom we embrace with the tenderest affection, and admire and love with the sincerest attachment, will die. Affection, medical skill, and the tenderest union of hearts and souls, are alike disregarded by death. Our parents, our companions, our dear partners, our "little ones," newly born, die. And, "if a man die, shall he live again?" Inquire of the ancient schools of philosophy. Ask those great teachers to bring their united lamps within the precinct of the grave. Propound to them the question so interesting to those who have been bereft of those whom they loved. It is in vain. From the grave, philosophy, untaught by the book of God, shrinks back with horror and despair. She looks into the grave without hope. But the Gospel, the blessed Gospel, the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, pours a flood of the most cheering light on this deeply affecting and melancholy subject. It assures us that the reign of death is doomed—that the destruction of the "last enemy" is certain. It assures us that the long sleep of our friends shall not be eternal; that the long night of death shall be succeeded by a bright and glorious morning. It teaches us that the dust of the saint is sacred, and that Death and Hades must give up their possessions. No morning is more certain than the resurrection morning. Of no future event need we feel less doubtful than of the resurrection of the dead.

The Old Testament saints were not uninformed on this subject. Did not revelation shed its benign light on the mind of Job, amid the dark and gloomy day through which he passed? Was it not to this that he alluded when he lifted up his weeping eyes, and raised his sorrowful, but hopeful voice to heaven, and said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day on the earth: and though after this skin, worms destroy my body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another?" It is beautifully affecting to see him looking through his tears to God; appealing to heaven, and firmly believing in the future appearance of God in his behalf. This doctrine forms a part of the sublime predictions of David, of Isaiah, of Daniel, and other prophets. But it is in the New Testament that this subject is most distinctly revealed. He whose province it was to roll away from the human mind the flood of darkness, in which it was shrouded, announces this doctrine in the clearest and most unmistakable language. By His own resurrection He also furnishes us, at once, both with the type and the pledge of ours. He in more respects than one could say, "I am the resurrection and the life." How emphatic are His words! "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which, all that are in the grave shall hear His voice, and come forth; they that *have done good*, unto the resurrection of life, and

they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." His own empty tomb—His own undoubted resurrection—assure us that as the grave was not able to triumph over Him, so neither shall it for ever exult over His disciples. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again; even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." In the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul reasons on this subject in the most sublime and conclusive manner. He states, that as Christ rose, *we* shall rise also. He demonstrates the fact of Christ's resurrection, and declares that, so surely as cause and effect succeed each other, our resurrection shall follow that of our Lord Jesus. If the one is matter of history, the other is of hope. If the one is looked back to as an event which *has* taken place, the other may be looked forward to as one that *will* take place. Believing that the one has transpired, we may and ought to believe that the other *will*. "For as in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order, Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming. The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised." It is, then, a matter of distinct revelation. Man shall rise, for "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." To those who doubt the doctrine, and deem it impossible, we reply, that He whose power is infinite and who cannot lie, has Himself declared that it shall take place. And

“why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that *God* should raise the dead?”

“Ask not *how* this can be? sure the same power
That reared the piece at first and took it down,
Can re-assemble the loose scattered parts,
And put them as they were. Almighty God
Has done much more, nor is His arm impaired
Through length of days! and while He can *He will*,
His faithfulness stands bound to see it done.”

With this view of the subject, then, we may in prospect sing, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” The great, the wide, “the greedy sea,” shall give up her dead, and all the tombs and vaults of the earth shall give up their dead. The voice of the archangel’s trump shall be heard in every land—sounding through the whole world—and all the dead shall be as attentive and obedient to its call, as was Lazarus to the voice of Him who “hath the keys of Hades and of Death.” The thing is certain. All shall rise. And although this doctrine never could have been discovered by the unaided light of reason, yet, now that it is revealed, we can discern Divine arrangements, especially at certain seasons of the year, that both illustrate and confirm our faith in the resurrection of the dead.

In the winter season, the general appearance of the earth is one of gloom and sterility. Instead of *fields and gardens* exhibiting their usual signs of

life, they are covered with tokens of death. The verdure of the fields, the foliage of the trees, and the beauty of the flowers are mostly gone. Death reigns where, a short time before, everything was instinct with life. The birds no longer make the woods vocal with their music. The trees stretch out their naked arms, and exhibit their bare trunks to the bitter winter blasts. Where, a short time ago, there was everything to excite joy, we then see nothing but what is suggestive of melancholy thoughts. Judging from appearances, if we were ignorant of the reviving power of spring, we should never expect the re-appearance of that beauty which we in the preceding summer saw around us. We should never expect that the flowers would exhibit again their fair forms, or that the trees and meadows would ever again be clothed with their former verdure. We should conclude that the earth was doomed to perpetual leanness, and that the reign of death would be endless. But as the seasons roll on, the days begin to lengthen, the air becomes milder, the sun shines forth benignantly, the showers that fall minister refreshment to the earth, and the face of nature begins to change. Flowers of the most delicate and lovely hues are again seen peeping out of the ground. The trees, and hedge-rows, and fields are again revived. Every object that meets the eye in our gardens, and orchards, and fields exhibits signs of life again. The birds sing again among the branches, and all nature gives

signs of returning life. Here, then, is a beautiful emblem and illustration of the resurrection. Every plant, and shrub, and tree is an emblem of the resurrection. The eye is pleased wherever it looks. All around rejoices at the change. The valleys sing, and the trees clap their hands. The wilderness and the solitary place rejoice, and the desert blossoms as the rose. At the *present* interesting season of the year, we are reminded, by every walk into the fields and gardens, of the resurrection. And we feel no hesitancy in saying that He who, in so short a time, could produce a change so remarkable and universal, can raise the dead. We love the beauties of spring, and delight to leave the town to roam among these beauties, while every object that meets our eye preaches to us the resurrection. The buds and blossoms forcing themselves out of every branch and stem of every tree, preach to us the resurrection. "The little hills rejoicing on every side" sing resurrection; while the notes, the ever-welcome notes of the spring birds echo back resurrection. To the most sceptical person who walks out and attentively surveys the works of God at this delightful season, we urge the inquiry, "*Why* should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" Can you set limits to the power of Him whose voice has spoke life and fertility into so many thousand objects around you, that so short *a time ago* gave no signs of life!

Again, look at that crawling caterpillar ; see the changes that it undergoes ; it seems to all appearance to die ; it enfolds itself snugly in a coffin ; it buries itself in the earth ; it exhibits no tokens whatever of life ; but, as the spring comes round, that buried insect feels a genial influence. There is motion about that coffin ; there seems to be life there ; the grub comes quietly out of its grave, but how changed its appearance. It was once a loathsome thing ; its appearance produced something approaching to disgust, but it is now arrayed in all the variegated colours of the rainbow. It no longer creeps, but flies from flower to flower, sipping their sweets, and vieing with them in loveliness and beauty. No one would have thought, who did not know its history, that the butterfly is the caterpillar changed and beautified. Here, then, we have an emblem and illustration of the resurrection. As it has burst the cerements of its little tomb, so shall we ; as it has undergone so remarkable a change, so shall we on that glorious morning. Well may we sing, in the words of Dr. Dwight—

“ Shall Spring the faded world revive,
Shall waning moons their light renew,
Again shall setting suns ascend,
And chase the darkness from our view ?
Shall life revisit dying worms,
And spread the joyful insect's wing,
And oh, shall man awake no more,
To see Thy face, Thy name to sing ?

Faith sees the bright eternal doors,
Unfold to make Thy children way ;
They *shall* be clothed in endless light,
And shine in everlasting day."

Rejoice, child of mortality ! The doctrine of the resurrection is the doctrine of the Bible. The grave shall not for ever triumph over those dear ones who have "fallen asleep in Christ."

" But they, new rising from the tomb,
With lustre brighter far shall shine,
Revive with ever-during bloom,
Safe from diseases and decline."

As the Scriptures inform us of the certainty of the resurrection, and as the subject receives illustration and confirmation from the teachings of Spring, so from the same sources—but especially from the Bible—we receive information, as to the glories of "that day," and the wonderful contrast between the present and future condition of the human frame. Man shall rise. "Those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." And what a glorious change shall be experienced by the body of the saint ! Now he is weak, feeble, liable to disease. A thousand causes obstruct the organs of the frame in the healthy discharge of their functions. The food we eat, the fluids we drink, the air we breathe, and the labours which we perform, often derange the body now. The most healthy and longest lived soon die. The frame that once was almost an *object* of devotion soon becomes loathsome and

offensive ; and even natural affection says, "Bury my dead out of my sight." But the resurrection body will have none of the frailties and infirmities of this "vile body." The following passage is very instructive and encouraging :—"It is sown in corruption ; it is raised in incorruption : it is sown in dishonour ; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness ; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body ; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man, Adam, was made a living soul ; the last Adam, was made a quickening spirit. The first man is of the earth, earthy ; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy, and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." In another place Paul tells us that this vile body shall be made "like the glorious body of Jesus Christ." The glorified body of the Saviour then shall be the model after which we shall be fashioned. It shall be no more a source of temptation or pain to the soul. It will no more be subject to decay or death. It "shall die no more ;" but it will bloom in eternal youth, and be endowed with unwearied and eternal vigour. It will obey the mandates of the soul ; and the body and soul shall mutually contribute to each other's happiness for ever.

How full of consolation is this sublime doctrine ! With what sorrow and reluctance do we carry our parents, companions, partners, or children to the grave ! The thought of our friends' cold bed fills our minds with sorrow. But they only sleep, and that sleep is calm, undisturbed, and dreamless. They will awake again. The eye that was bright will become bright again—a thousand times brighter than before. The countenance that was beautiful shall assume beauty again—beauty perfect, complete, eternal. They will rise again, arrayed in ten thousand times more loveliness, with the assurance, too, that they will never more suffer decay or death. We shall meet with, unite with, and doubtless, *know* these saints with whom we were united on earth, and with undying minds and bodies dwell for ever in the "Paradise of God."

While the resurrection is an object of desire and expectation to the pious, it is an object of fear and dread to the ungodly. How very different are the feelings with which the saint and the sinner contemplate this subject ! While the former shall awake to "everlasting life," the latter shall—awful thought !—awake to "shame and everlasting contempt." There will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and also of the unjust. Alas for the sinner on that morning ! Oh the shriek of horror with which the body and soul shall then meet ! Then the great and the noble, kings and *mighty men*, shall call on the rocks to fall on them,

and the hills to cover them, to hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the Throne.

I cannot close this article without expressing admiration of, and obligation to, the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. It meets man as he enters into the world and says, in the words of its benign Author, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." It takes him by the hand, sheds its bright beams around his path, and offers to be in every step of his journey "a lamp unto his feet, and a light to his path." It invites him to union and fellowship with God, secures to him forgiveness and holiness, and, if he is obedient, makes his body a temple of the Holy Ghost. In all his sorrows it never deserts man, but is "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." It accompanies him through life, and enables him to say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for *Thou* art with me." It conducts him through the gloomy path, sheds some rays of light around him, and introduces him to "the presence of God, where there is fulness of joy." When the saint gently falls asleep, his head leaning on the bosom of Jesus, his spirit escapes to Abraham's bosom; his "flesh also rests in hope." Gentle reader, let us embrace with all our soul this blessed Gospel "to-day," so shall we each "have part in the first resurrection." Amen.

THE SCHOOL OF ADVERSITY.


"But He knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold."—JOB.

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted."—DAVID.

"These are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple, and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."—APOCALYPSE.

MAN on earth is at school. He is, in this world, in a state of pupilage. All things, all events, all beings, are his teachers. The universe of matter, and the universe of mind, each impart appropriate lessons. Streaming from all worlds, and at all times, there come important lessons and influences, designed to inform, to mould, and develop his soul. Man is a being of transcendent importance. For a destiny eternal in its duration, he is now being educated. He is, all through life, at school. In this school or college there are various classes. He "whose chair is in heaven" is the Head Master. He appoints the under-teachers. He watches over and observes the progress of each pupil; He confers the rewards, and He administers the chastisements; none are overlooked by Him. He knows the powers—He understands the capabilities of each—and *appoints to them suitable tasks.* In this school are

found all ranks, all classes—men of every variety of mind. Peers, peasants, monarchs, subjects, profound thinkers, and persons of feeble understanding—the little child and the man with gray hairs; the proud and the humble; the diligent and the indolent—all are alike at school. God is educating us for active service in time, and for still higher and more active service in eternity. The Primer, and the Bible—the Spelling Book, and Euclid—the volumes of Nature, and of Inspiration—creation, providence, and redemption—all minister to the great work. God aims at the perfecting of our nature in “knowledge and true holiness.” There is, however, one important department—one grand division—one great class-room—the lessons taught in which are too often forgotten, and by too many never seriously pondered as the Great Teacher designed they should be. It is a class in which most persons are placed in some period of their lives. But for want of attention—of wise and prayerful application—the days spent there are to many all but in vain; and in some—alas, in too many cases—the time is worse than lost. For no influences are neutral in their effects. Few persons think sufficiently of the great responsibility that rests on them, and the vast importance that the “Great Taskmaster” attaches to the lessons which He seeks to impart in this department of His great university. I allude to the department pointed out by the title that is given to this article—*The School of Adversity*.



The phrase is a common and a very suggestive one ; and its distinct consideration may be rendered deeply instructive. It is the writer's opinion that its claims are not sufficiently pondered, and that the consequences of such neglect are deeply deplorable. Many are sickly on this account. We fear many sustain injury and depression for want of right views on the subject of Divine chastisement. We equally err when we either "despise the chastening of the Lord," or "faint when we are rebuked of Him." If the writer can pen down a few thoughts that shall aid any in forming correct opinions, or be rendered, by the Divine blessing, of the least service to his "brethren and companions in tribulation at the kingdom and patience of Jesus," he will feel sincerely thankful. He acknowledges inability but as his own mind has often been turned to this subject, not only in his official but individual capacity—not merely for general, but *personal* edification and comfort—perhaps some views may be suggested that God may condescend to bless. However, "necessity is laid upon me" earnestly "serve my generation" as God may help me. May He deign to bless both the writers and the readers.

The providence of God is a "great deep." In His dealings with the sons of men there is much that is "past finding out." Large and ample as is the volume of providence, closely written as are many of its golden pages, shining out in clearness, distinctness, and prominence, as are many of its instructive

lessons, we have still to say, "Lo, these are parts of His ways; but how little a portion is heard of Him? but the thunder of His power who can understand?" The mine is unfathomable, and contains many veins of most precious ore—more precious than the far-famed gold fields of California and Australia. No earnest digger shall go unrewarded in his sacred toil. Time writes no wrinkles on the ocean's face. Its smooth surface contains no intimation of the fleets which it has engulfed; or of the immense treasures which it contains: we nevertheless know that there are pearls for the diver, and there is a reward for the industrious fisherman. The deep and wide ocean of Providence also contains glorious treasures, but they must be sought for. In the Bible, while we have many most important lessons, presented in brief, emphatic, and beautiful sentences, many of its distinguishing truths are shown in action. It is the Divine mode of exhibiting truth, by the history of nations and individuals. The *principles* of God's government are presented in the *history* of his people. Biblical "history" is Divine "philosophy teaching by example." Religion is a life—the Divine life infused into, and exemplified by, the life of the "man of God." To the production and maintenance of this life all God's dispensations and dealings with man are conducted. And it is a remarkable fact, full of significant and suggestive truth, that those whose own lives have furnished the best embodiment, and most complete manifesta-

tion of the Divine, and whom God has honoured. His agents in blessing others, have passed not a little of their short history, in the "School of Adversity." Their own characters have been formed and moulded, they have been trained for future active service by their experience in the "School of Adversity."

I will now select a few of the most prominent and most useful of the men whose lives have been written by inspired penmen "for our learning, and briefly seek to point out some of the benefits that they derived as individuals, and conferred on their own and succeeding ages, from the instruction and influences that were brought to bear on the minds in the "School of Adversity."

It is, indeed, said of Him who is at once "our elder Brother"—"the Captain of our salvation"—"the brightness of the Father's glory," and the "author of eternal life to as many as obey Him" that He was "*made perfect through suffering.*" How far these words refer to His official, and how far to His personal human character, it is perhaps impossible to say. "It behoved Him to suffer," not only to make an atonement, but "it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, *that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able also to succour them that are tempted.*" But it is not on the example and character of Jesus that I mean to dwell. I leave the reader to think for himself on the suggestive word

quoted above. We leave Him who was "fairer than the children of men," and come to those who were, in the most complete sense of the word, "*men of like passions with ourselves.*" I might select many from the family of Abraham whose entire history is full of incident—of wonders—and instruction. Oh how deeply instructive is the entire story of that wonderful family, from the first notice we have of the "Father of the faithful, when God significantly *knocked at his door at midnight*"—and directed him to go into a land of which he would tell him—to the affecting narrative of the little ark placed among the flags by the brink of the Nile—on to the anointing of David, the fair-haired, ruddy-faced "child of genius"—and on still to the story of Daniel, the "man greatly beloved," standing by the side of the "great river which is Hiddekel"—on still to the account of the disciple "whom Jesus loved," who was in the "isle that is called Patmos," standing amid the stupendous glories of the Apocalypse. The field is wide, varied, and full of thrilling interest. And "whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our learning." They have left their experience and history as a rich legacy to the Church of God. And while some of the lessons of their history are so plain and clear that "he that runneth may read"—there are others that strike only those who "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the records of the Bible. Those who were of the greatest and most essential service to their

own age, and whose names are "as ointment poured forth"—whose lives and writings have most deeply coloured the stream of human events—were men whose education was to a great extent imparted to them in the School of Adversity.

The first name that I shall mention is that of one who has not left behind him a memorial of his own experience, or the results of his own studies, written by his own hand; but he has left a name that brings before myriads of minds the image of a man of extraordinary holiness, much suffering, melting pathos, and virtue, who, after being "seven times purified," shone like burnished gold, and met, even in this world, with an "exceeding great reward." His history is the most touching and affecting story of any merely human being. And as Dr. A. Clark observes, had it not formed part of the Holy Bible, to all of which the carnal mind is at enmity, it would have been translated into all the languages of the globe. Each one will see that I refer to the history of Joseph. Who has not wept over the life of Joseph? What imagination has not often pictured to itself the amiable and favourite son of Israel arrayed in "his coat of many colours." Poor boy, how anguish-smitten was his soul when his unkind and envious brothers sold him for a slave! He would feel unutterable things while in the pit, but he would feel much more as the land of his birth, the home of his too partial father, receded from his view, and all the horrors of banishment

arose before his excited imagination. He arrives in Egypt; he is again sold; he rises in the house of his master—becomes his head steward, has unbounded confidence placed in him. But, alas! his prosperity is, as yet, only short-lived. He *has a conscience; he fears God; he suffers for his integrity and purity; he is cast into an Eastern dungeon.* His “feet are hurt with fetters.” Foul suspicion hangs over his fair fame. Far from the peaceful and happy home of his father, felons as his companions, he occupies a very humble seat in the School of Adversity. He remains a long time in this school. He has “need of patience.” “*But the Lord was with Joseph.*” The beauty of his character was discerned by the jailer, but his time for full deliverance was not yet. God was preparing him for future eminence. The time of spring approached. “The king sent and loosed him, even the ruler of the people, and let him go free.” He not only comes out of prison, but the mist and darkness that hang around his name are exhaled. God brings forth “his righteousness as the light and his judgment as the noon-day.” And he not only ceases to be a captive; he becomes a prime minister—the greatest statesman of his time; he teaches the Egyptian senators wisdom. He is attired much more gorgeously than even his father attired him, when he put on him the coat of many colours. The cry is heard as his chariot approaches, “*Bow the knee!*” The son of the Hebrew shepherd doubtless needed

previous training in the School of Adversity to fit him for the eminence to which he rose ; becoming as he did a father to famine-smitten Egypt, and the nourisher of his aged parent and family. In after-time, he never forgot "the rock from whence he was hewn ;" but equally during the years of overflowing abundance, as in the time of famine, he conducted himself with consummate piety and prudence.

Who ever read with dry eyes the account of his meeting with his dear brother Benjamin, and his long season of weeping on the neck of his aged father ? Beautifully do the lights and shadows blend in his inimitably beautiful and instructive history. Had he, like the son of Jesse, been a poet, a writer of Psalms, no doubt he had left us a precious book. Like David, he would doubtless have said, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." Would he not have told us that he learned much that was of great service to him in after-life while confined in prison, and suffering unjustly ? The dungeon experience did its part towards the formation of his symmetrical and beautiful character. Its gloom forms a striking background on which the Divine artist paints in glowing colours his virtue and after prosperity. The "anguish of his soul" was educationary in its influence, and, though not for the "present joyous, but grievous," afterwards it produced, in abundant plenty, "the peaceable fruits of righteousness." Well did the early *teachings* of his father sustain him ; the good seed

fell in prolific soil; it produced, even in the unlikely atmosphere of a prison, divine fruit. He was a man of sterling worth and moral beauty. His portrait has been hung up in the great picture gallery of the world, to be gazed upon, admired, and imitated by all young men. Look at him, youthful reader! look till you are like him, and remember that God designs the life of Joseph, the son of Jacob, as a "study for young men."

Let us not whine or sink when in adverse circumstances; but bend our minds on turning our trials to good account, and above all things let us reverence truth, and virtue, and honour, and obey Almighty God. We may make everything subservient to the highly important work of self-culture. Joseph honoured God, and his reward was an approving conscience, the Divine presence, the happiness of serving his generation in a remarkable manner, high distinction in life, and a most conspicuous niche "in the temple of fame;" and, what is better still, he is doubtless one of those who "shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."

But Joseph died, and all that generation, and a new king arose who knew not Joseph. Israel was oppressed. The conduct of the Egyptians to the sons of Jacob was cruel in the extreme. Laws were enacted of a most tyrannical and inhuman character: an infernal policy was adopted. The Egyptians thought to "deal wisely" with them, and truly their wisdom was "earthly, sensual, devilish;" but by

their cruelties, they hastened the time of Israel's deliverance. The Jews greatly need, and earnestly cry, for a Saviour. But from whence is He to come? The night grows darker and darker; the cry of anguish waxes louder and louder; it is not unheard by the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. A fair and beautiful child is born; he is hid from the "murderers of the innocents" for three months. To the great grief of his parents, his concealment is no longer possible. A little ark is prepared for him: he is placed among the shrubs growing on the banks of the Nile. The ark is found by the king's daughter. Its covering is removed—"And behold the babe wept." It is on a woman's ears that the cry of the infant falls. Her womanly heart is affected; she resolves—what else could she do?—to spare him. He becomes her adopted son. His mother has the joy of nursing him for a time. He is afterwards taken to the court. "He was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and became mighty in word and deed." That weeping babe is to become the deliverer to his brethren, and the divinely appointed law-giver of a world. He excels in the schools of Egypt God is educating him for the work of his life; but before his education is completed, he must enter the School of Adversity. The wise men of "the land of Ham" have taught him all that they knew. He has already received intimation of the future *designs of God*. In prospect of the work God

for him to accomplish, and the rewards he has to bestow, the riches of Pharaoh are despised, and the splendours of the court become dim. "He endures as seeing Him who is invisible." He must enter another school. He must become conversant with other scenes, he must listen to other teachers. He was taken from the court into the desert, to converse with his own heart, and with God, in solitude. He becomes a stranger in the land of Midian. The flocks, the herds, the wilderness, the mountains, and the stars, must become his teachers now. He has seen a palace, he must see a desert; he has mixed with society, he must converse with solitude. In that solemn quietude his wonderful mind is growing to a sublime altitude and a mild dignity: he becomes, what he well needed to be, *the meekest of men*. He who passed the first forty years of his life in the palace of the Pharaohs and the Egyptian halls of science, passes the second forty in the desert of Midian. He is being fitted for the stupendous events of the third forty—the events in Egypt, in the Red Sea, in the wilderness, on Sinai's awful mount—until at length he shall die on Mount Pisgah. The lessons that he learned in solitude were no less needful than any of the other remarkable circumstances of his eventful history. How much the world owes to the teachings which Moses received in the School of Adversity, it is impossible to tell. To the thoughtful and contemplative, he is not less interesting in his solitude than in the

more active and more imposing period of his life.

There is another of those ancient worthies, who not only "served his generation by the will of God," but has served succeeding generations, as very few of even the "holy men of God" have done who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." I refer to David, the sweet singer of Israel. How much we are indebted, under God, to him, for many of our most valued lessons and happiest hours. He has been our closet companion. He has sympathised with us in affliction, soothed us in sorrow, rejoiced in our joy, and wept with us when we have wept. In the "house of prayer" his inspiring strains have raised our languid devotions; and in the "house of mourning" he has been our principal comforter as well as teacher. In the "house of our pilgrimage" his varied and diversified strains have as faithfully described the different phases of our experience, as the mirror gives us back our own features. He had a fine genius, a noble nature, and a sensitive and susceptible heart. If he sinned, he also suffered and most bitterly repented; and "let him that is without sin cast the first stone." He spent a large part of his chequered life in the School of Adversity. It is interesting to picture him coming from the field, while only a youth, "ruddy and of fair countenance," to be anointed, as the future king, by the venerable prophet Samuel. It is interesting to imagine him, while watching "now the

lambs and now the stars," singing those fine strains, beginning, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge"—or pouring out from his pious heart those favourite and oft-repeated words—"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." The music of his harp sounds sweetly as it blends with the bleating of his sheep, the lowing of the herds, or the mild rustle of the leaves of the tree under which he sits, as it is shaken by the wind. It is delightful to join with him in the service of God, as his loud songs of praise reverberate among the "hills that are round about Jerusalem." We delight to listen to his exulting song, his mildly glad strains, or his rapturous outpourings of holy joy. But there are other strains more moving still. They touch, and they move, deeper chords in our hearts; they reach still "deeper depths" in our souls. It is a profoundly true remark of M. L. Kossuth, that "sorrow takes deeper root in the human heart than joy." And if we were forced to lose any of the Psalms of David, we should most sincerely deprecate the loss of those plaintively tender, or mournfully melancholy strains, which his soul poured out before God. They proved him to be *human*; and they give us to feel that he is our *brother*. We delight

in his calm, quiet strains of unmoved confidence. Our hearts sympathise with his loud burst of praise. But it is when "deep calleth unto deep" that we feel most impressed; it is when the strings of his harp are touched with trembling fingers, and its strains blend with the loud roar of the "waves and the billows which go over" him, that we feel most indebted to him. When he turns his weeping eyes to heaven, those eyes "watching for the morning," and he, with strong internal struggle, exclaims—"Yet the Lord will command his loving-kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life"—it is then that we most thank God for the Psalms of David. His wanderings, when hunted by Saul—"like the partridge upon the mountains;" his hasty and hurried flight from Jerusalem before his unnatural son—his unnumbered personal and relative sufferings—his many conflicts and sorrows—his lessons in the School of Adversity, prepared him for writing those beautiful Psalms that have been a solace to millions, and are among the most precious portions of the Book of God. How finely he closes his devotional utterances—"Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things, and blessed be His glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen. The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended." It was he who made so *glorious* a termination of the battle of life, who

said, "It was good for me that I have been afflicted." His harp is now tuned in a higher sphere, and God has wiped all tears from his eyes. His flesh and his heart have failed, but "God is the strength of his heart and his portion for ever."

We come to the New Testament, and on its threshold we meet with one of whom we are told that He was "*in the desert* until the time of His appearing unto Israel." The last book of the same volume was written by a suffering witness for the testimony of Jesus, in an island of the *Ægean Sea*. Of Jesus, "the Man of sorrows," I will not now speak; but a word about Paul shall close this chapter. He was the best educated of the New Testament writers. The best Jewish schools and the most accomplished doctors of the law had done what they could to develop a mind of more than ordinary depth and power. The lore of Greek poets and philosophers was not unknown to him. He became a Christian. He was unusually favoured with "visions and revelations of the Lord." He was set for the defence of the Gospel; and he was well able. But how shall Saul of Tarsus learn to speak "a word in season to him that is weary?" "To comfort the feeble-minded, and support the weak; to comfort all that mourn?" He had learned to reason logically, and write and speak with powerful eloquence. He had been caught up to paradise; and amid its stupendous scenes and glories, learned some important lessons. But this is not enough; he will need to

sympathise with the suffering; and how can he, unless he suffers himself? By a baptism of deep personal sorrow; and his account of his varied sufferings is one of the most remarkable passages in any book. His words are deeply affecting, and deserve to be quoted. Comparing himself with other teachers of the new faith, he says he was—"In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in death oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." It was a *man* who thus suffered. Well, what did he learn by these sufferings? He lost none of his sensibility. He did not become either stoical or cynical. He retained the feelings of a tender-hearted, fine-spirited, and most benevolent man. He learned to "comfort others with the comfort wherewith himself was comforted of God." The following are among the tender utterances of him who *wrote the argumentative Epistles to the Romans*,

Galatians, and Hebrews ; and who preached the sermon on Mars Hill :—"I reckon that the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For all things work together for good to them that love God. Most gladly will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessity, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake ; for when I am weak, then am I strong. I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory : while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

THE SCHOOL OF ADVERSITY.

PART SECOND.

"Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement; I will not offend any more; that which I see not teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more."—ELIHU.

"My son despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of His correction; for whom the Lord loveth He correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."—SOLOMON.

"Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of Spirits and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their pleasure: but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness."—PAUL.

IN the last chapter I endeavoured to point out some of the teachings of the Holy Scriptures concerning the School of Adversity. The names of some of the most distinguished men "of old time" were mentioned, and their history briefly sketched. It was endeavoured to be shown that the painful and afflictive dispensations of Divine Providence had much to do in making them what they were; the training and maturing of their characters, the perfecting of these saints, rendering them "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." The remarks there offered may, perhaps, *have suggested* useful thoughts to some minds—

adding them of many others whose history explains the useful bearing of the same principle. The subject is far—very far—from being exhausted. And it as a subject involving the most solemn consequences; indeed, anything that has a bearing on the education of a soul is important. However light a matter may be in itself, if it tells favourably, otherwise, on an immortal mind, it is momentous.

That mind is of infinite importance. It is possible to over-estimate the value of right training—that which shall for ever *be*—which may remain, in the service of God, work of the highest value and importance—dwell in the highest regions and participate in the highest happiness—its education can never be held in too great estimation.

God does not sufficiently prize and reverence the man with which his Maker has endowed him. The redeeming work of Christ should impress

us with our own sinfulness, it ought to raise, and tends to raise, our views and feelings of the immense worth of our souls. It is not “a light matter” that “*we* should be called the sons of God.”

It is not a light matter that we should be made partakers of the Divine nature.” It is not a light matter that our eyes should be brought to

contemplate the King in His beauty, and to behold the Son of God that is a very far off.” It is not a light matter

that persons so unworthy, so fallen, so sinful, so depraved as we are, should be made “worthy to walk” with “the Lamb in white.” Final salva-

tion is a matter of infinite interest and adoring wonder.

“How can it be Thou Heavenly King,
That Thou shouldst us to glory bring;
Make slaves the partners of Thy throne,
Deck'd with a never-fading crown?”

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. But as it “became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation *perfect through suffering*,” so, also, it is a part of the great scheme of human regeneration, and the complete education of the soul of man, to render him, by “much tribulation,” meet to “enter into the joy of his Lord.” And it is a proof as much of the love as the wisdom of God, that He will cause “all things to work together for good to them that love Him.” “Who is He”—or, what is it—“that shall harm you so long as ye are followers of that which is good?” Nay, those hostile influences—those painful trials—those “manifold temptations” shall all contribute to the high, the holy, and the glorious work of preparing you for sitting down “with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.”

“Our glorious leader claims our praise,
For His own pattern given ;
While the long cloud of witnesses
Show the same path to heaven.”

this will not be by magic. It will not follow “a matter of course.” It will not come “by ervation.” God wills our eternal glorification. his is the will of God, even your sanctification.” hing is so pleasing to Him as the multiplication opies of the likeness of His own Son. For this he arrangements of Providence are conducted, this “Jesus died and rose again.” For this He er liveth to make intercession.” For this the ly Spirit is given. *This is the end of the Gospel.* this work is not carried on by Jehovah independent of human co-operation. *We must become kers with God.* He “worketh *in us* to will and to of His own good pleasure.” But we must “*work* our own salvation with fear and trembling.” obedience to His command, by co-working with Spirit, by a wise improvement of our opportunities, by making it “the business of our lives,” may, and we infallibly shall, secure “glory, our, immortality, and eternal life.” We, then, uld ever feel the force of the thought, that *we e a work to do.* We have a part, a most important part, to act. We must use the means by ch the most apparently adverse and unpropitious events and influences may become the most ul means of spiritual edification. So that we

may become all that they are, who are now "before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple." If we do not seek to profit by the dispensations of Divine Providence, we may, by our wilful perverseness, become "vessels of wrath fitted for destruction." How, then, ought we to act so that there may be accomplished in us, and by us, the highest and kindest designs of God? What ought to be our conduct in the School of Adversity?

The passages of Scripture at the head of this mediation are among the most suggestive and instructive portions of the Word of God on this subject. I will endeavour, as I best can, to aid the reader in understanding, and becoming impressed with their import. May He whose Spirit indited them help and bless us. Amen.

The most prominent and important lessons which they appear to teach, are, that while undergoing Divine chastisement, in whatever way, we should recognise Divine Providence; bow meekly to the Divine arrangements; inquire into the Divine will have confidence in the Divine goodness; and aim at securing the Divinely intended results.

I. We ought to Recognise the Divine Providence.

Afflictions do not spring out of the dust. They do not come by accident. They are not entirely the result of human or infernal maliciousness. Our foes could have "no power at all except it were given them from above." "The Lord reigneth."

He doeth whatsoever He will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. "Is there evil," that is calamity or trouble, "in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" "Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without the notice of your heavenly Father : and the hairs of your head are all numbered." The superintendence of Divine Providence extends to the smallest as well as the largest creatures and circumstances. While God cannot be tempted with evil, He still allows its existence. He permits the existence and operation of causes which produce affliction and sorrow to the most pious of His children. It is not without God's permission that any, either the most trivial or the most serious of our bereavements or afflictions befall us. Indeed, the Holy Scriptures always direct us *immediately to God*. They ever teach us to see and acknowledge God in all our trials. They always represent Him as "nigh at hand." "Surely it is meet to be said unto *God*, I have borne chastisement." In speaking of the afflictions and trials of life, the wise man calls them "*the chastening of the Lord*." "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence. They did it after their own pleasure, but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." It was with much pathos and sincerity that the weeping sisters of Lazarus said to Jesus, "*Lord, if Thou hadst been here, our brother had not died.*" And do not we too often attribute our afflictions to the absence of Jesus, or the in-

difference of our Father in heaven? Whereas He ever holds the rod in His own hand, He directly sends or permits the trial to come. He prepares the medicine. He heats the fire. He watches the furnace. We all hold these opinions as matters of theory. We believe in a particular as well as a general Providence—that the general, indeed, includes the particular. But it is one thing to hold an opinion in theory, and another to reduce our theory to every-day practice. It is one thing to have a correct system of theology, and another to regulate all our feelings and practices thereby. Which of us fully recognises the hand of God? Are we not apt to stop at secondary causes? When Job was stripped of his vast wealth, and made childless in a day, he calmly said, “The *Lord gave*, and *the Lord* hath taken away.” We admire—do we imitate Him? Do we not often practically banish God from His own world? Do we not feel and act as if *He* had *not* done it? In our prosperity how often do we forget Him, and “sacrifice to our own net, and burn incense to our own drag.” And do we not often forget God when we are in adversity? He desires to bring us to a constant recognition of His hand. He reigns, and wishes to bring us to a daily consciousness of His sovereign sway. The doctrine is an important one; and as consoling as it is important. It assures us that a good man is immortal till his work is done; and *that nothing* shall happen to us without the *permission of the All-wise and the All-kind*. It is He who

made me that afflicts me. It is He who loves me that holds in His hand the chastening rod. He says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." It is my heavenly Father who is Head-Master in the School of Adversity. I may, then, look on everything—even the most trying—as manifestations of His love. "Whom the Lord *loveth* He chasteneth." He is near me—He is thinking of me—He is deeply interested in me. These pains He inflicts; these afflictions He sends; these sorrows He appoints; these losses are by His permission. How ought I, then, to feel when I know that bitter as the cup is, He mixed it—that painful as the strokes are, He inflicts them—and that dark as is that cloud, "*God is there.*" I was living on His bounty, fed by His hand, sustained by His arm, warmed by His sun, and breathing His air, and still forgetting Him. His gifts engrossed the thoughts that should have ascended to the Giver; and He has withdrawn them that I might acknowledge His hand; I will remember the Lord; I will acknowledge the operation of His hand.

"It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." I remember who said in the time of extreme trial, "I held my peace because *Thou* didst it." I will think of the command, "Be still, and know that I am God." I will say with the poet—

"Thankful I take the cup from Thee,
Prepared and mingled by Thy skill;
Though bitter to the taste it be,
Powerful the wounded soul to heal."

In addition to a calm and thoughtful recognition of the Divine hand, we ought—

II. *To Bow meekly to the Divine Arrangements.*

Surely nothing can be more reasonable and proper than meek acquiescence in the arrangements of unerring wisdom and boundless love. He who rules cannot err; He who appoints us our lot cannot be unkind; He who manages the complicated affairs of all worlds cannot do wrong—“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” As we derive our being from Him—as we are sustained constantly by His hand—as all our blessings are Divine—as it is “in Him we live and move, and have our being,” meek acquiescence in His appointments is most proper and most wise. There may be mystery that confounds us in His plans; we cannot be expected, with the short sounding line of our reason, to fathom the ocean of His Providence; but since it is the Lord who reigneth, submission to His government is our interest and our duty. Our fondest hopes may be cut off—our sanguine desires may be denied us—our most valuable possessions may take to themselves wings, and, like birds of passage, fly away. That which we least anticipated may happen to us; that which we most deprecated may befall us; the desire of our eyes may be taken away at a stroke—our hearts may be bleeding at the sorrows that fall upon us; but our will should bow—our souls should

submit. We should be less than men if we did not feel these afflictions. They would fail of answering their end if we were not pained by them; we should "despise the chastenings of the Lord" if no impression was made on our natures by His chastenings. But while the soul "grieves in secret places," and the "eye pours out tears unto God," the heart should bow lowly before His throne, and the mind sincerely say, "*Thy will be done.*" "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits?" "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisements, I will not offend any more." In the history of David there is one mournfully interesting instance of his quiet submission to God, in the time of severest trial. I do not refer to his submission on the death of the child for whose preservation he had so deeply humbled himself, and so earnestly prayed; but when informed of whose death, he said uncomplainingly, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." I do not refer to his meekly bearing the cursings and cruel reproaches of Shemei, when his faithful servants were stayed from taking off the head of the insulting man, by the king saying, "Let him curse, because *the Lord* hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, *wherefore hast thou* done it? And David said to Abiathar, and to all his servants, Behold my son, which came forth of my own bowels, seeketh my life: how much

more now may this Benjamite do it! Let him alone, let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be the Lord will look on my affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for this cursing this day." These are both affectingly instructive instances of David's submission to God in the "day of adversity." But the utterance of the poet-king to which I refer, is one that he made in reference to the ark of God, when he, his household, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, had just come down in haste from their homes in the holy city, and were hastening for their lives from the pursuit by his unnatural son. The kindest of fathers flees before the most unfaithful of sons. The most paternal of monarchs flies before subjects whose affections have been alienated by the most deceitful conduct of his own son. Aged and sorrowful, the king crosses the brook Kedron, accompanied by those who remain faithful to him. At the foot of the hill on which Jerusalem is built he stands. The scene is one of weeping and lamentation; he, who in youth, had been hunted by a jealous king, is now pursued by an ambitious son; the conqueror of surrounding nations must witness a civil war—a war in Israel—a war between brethren, one of the most painful and unhappy wars ever fought. An old man—he must again wander in the wilderness, where, in his younger days, he had endured so many hardships and narrow escapes from his pursuers. It is "*not an enemy*" that has risen against him, but a beloved

son. Hard is his lot ; deplorable is his fate ; dark are his future prospects ; black, very black clouds gather over his head ; loud is the sound of thunder that his imagination hears ; to whom shall he look ? to his faithful and tried dependents ? They are there around him, affected to tears. To the priests of God ? They are there, conveying the ark, that was built by the Divine command, into the desert : there they stand by the brook Kedron. The following are the affecting words of the sacred historian ; “ And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over ; and the king also himself passed over the brook Kedron, and all the people passed over toward the way of the wilderness. And, lo, Zadok also, and all the Levites were with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God : and they set down the ark of God ; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city. And the king said unto Zadok, *Carry back the ark of God unto the city : If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me back again, and show me both it and His habitation : But if He say thus, I have no delight in thee ; behold, here I am, let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him.*” This is one of the most affecting, as well as instructive, events recorded in any book. A kind and indulgent father driven before a cruel and guilty son ; an aged king fleeing before an army of his own subjects, headed by that son ; a man of exalted devotion leaving regretfully the city

of "Divine solemnities," where his soul had often found it good to worship, and to the services of which his consecrated genius had so often ministered. A weeping monarch, and a weeping people. But as the king casts his last look on the ark of God, as he lifts up his eyes to his own deserted palace and once happy home, as he turns his face toward the wilderness, no murmuring words escape from his lips. But his kingly head bows meekly before him, who had in early life placed on it the crown. Through his streaming eyes he looks above the dark cloud, and calmly and uncomplainingly commits all his affairs into the hands of God. If the worst shall come, for that worst he is prepared; and not one unsubmissive word shall escape his lips. But in the innermost depths of his being, he says, "Thy will be done." We admire this instance of David's submission to God; we drop a tear over the pathetic story. Let us do more—let us learn the lesson which David practised; let us submit *ourselves to God*. As we recognise His hand in all our sufferings, let us bow to that hand. As did David, so let us "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt us in due time." Submission brings calmness into the soul. It extracts honey from the bitterest flower. It lightens the heaviest load—it takes the edge from the keenest sufferings—it secures to us the highest moral good from the greatest natural evil—it brings some beams of light into the mind in the gloomiest of sorrow—it gives a hue of interest ar

beauty to the most forbidding circumstances. It takes "hold of God's strength:" and not unfrequently causes the rod to drop from His uplifted hand; or, if the trial continue, it secures sustaining and supporting grace: it causes our captivity to turn as the streams in the south; or, when the period of captivity lasts, it makes the captive a *sacred being*. It hallows "*the strange land*;" while it gives a holy calmness to the soul, it secures the sanctified use of the most painful trials.

But insubordination raises a tempest in the soul; it brings over the mind increasing gloom; it adds mental misery and guilt to affliction; it is kicking against the goads; it protracts the period of our trials; the design of God being to teach us "obedience by the things which we suffer." Insubordination prevents us from realising, as the result of Divine chastening, the peaceable fruits of righteousness; it renders us increasingly unfit for the future service of our God. Sad, indeed, is the history of those who, though for a long time placed in the School of Adversity, still learn not this most important and essential lesson. But blessed are they who learn to say in a calmly firm, and unmurmuring spirit, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more; what I see not teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more."

A further duty incumbent on us, when in the *School of Adversity*, is—

III. *To inquire into the Divine Will.*

Since "afflictions spring not from the dust, nor trouble out of the ground"—since these things come neither by blind Chance nor cruel Fate—since the world is under the righteous governance of *Design* and *Love*, it becomes us earnestly and sincerely to inquire into the will of God in the time of affliction and sorrow. What are the lessons that He would have us to learn? Are there not other lessons besides a practical recognition of the Divine hand, and meek submission to the Divine arrangements? Are there not some *special* lessons, that we either never learned or have since forgotten that He designs to teach us, by the painful events which He allows to transpire around us, bearing on our individual comfort? Does not one of the saints of old pray, "Show me, I beseech thee, *wherefore* thou contendest with me?" Is it not meet to be said unto God, "I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. *That which I see not, teach thou me?*" And, alas! how much do we each need to learn. Of how many of the lessons bearing on our spiritual education are we as yet ignorant! How much of the mind of God, that we ought to know, are we yet unacquainted with. Our mental vision is weak and clouded. We often "see men as trees walking;" we have looked so much on earthly things, and so little on heavenly, that the "deep things of God" are unknown to us. The "things that are not seen," are not *duly* impressing our minds with their overwhelming

importance. As our conduct is the outward expression of our opinions, right views are of infinite importance to us, and the School of Adversity has its special lessons for us. In this department of God's great university, lessons are taught that cannot be learned elsewhere. We may almost unconsciously have been priding ourselves on our self-sufficiency, but at the same time have been ignorant of much that we ought to have known. God "called us into the wilderness that He might there talk with" us. He, perhaps, calls us into solitude—the solitude, it may be, of widowhood, or childlessness, or poverty, or of the sick room. We *have souls*; there is an hereafter; our souls have peculiar wants—God alone can supply those wants. There are special duties which He has for us to discharge; He has special lessons to impart to us; in this world, as in the next, there is something special for which we are to be fitted. In serving God, in benefiting man, there are special fields of useful service for which we need preparing. He who intends to employ us, trains us in his own way; but there are solemn responsibilities resting on *us*; we are not machines, but men. If God speaks, we must listen; if we are to learn His will, attention will be required; if impressions are to be made on our nature, our susceptibilities must be cherished, not blunted. The Bible is given that its lessons may be read. The provisions of the gospel are made, but they must be embraced. Adversity *has its lessons*, but they are taught only to the

attentive; they enter only the open and the willing ear. Prayer is the means of direct communion with God, and one most important mode of learning His will—"If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." "For all these things I will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do them for them." Whatever be our objects of pursuit, prayer is an important means of help, and in learning the lessons of this school, no less than in any other. "Is any afflicted? let him pray." "Call upon me in the day of trouble." And while prayer will calm the soul, and clear our mental vision, it will also bring down Divine light, by the help of which we shall see things as they *are*. While the act itself benefits us it will be the means of imparting the most valuable lessons. "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, *That which I see not, teach thou me.*"

It has been stated above, that in addition to a Recognition of the Divine Hand, Submission to the Divine Arrangements, and Inquiry into the Divine Will, there should also be—

IV. *Cherished confidence in the Divine Goodness.*

When our sufferings are many and long-continued—when storm follows storm—and cloud chases cloud—and mysterious events succeed each other in quick, steady, and painful succession—when affliction of body is accompanied by outward poverty, human neglect, and mental depression,

it is no wonder if the temptation to doubt the Divine kindness is sometimes suggested. Triumphant vice, and oppressed virtue, are not uncommon things in this strange world. Joseph may be in a dungeon, while his disappointed and malicious tempter and accuser mingles with gay society. The wicked may be in great power, spreading themselves like the green bay tree, while the pious man has waters of a full cup wrung out to him. Paul, the virtuous, the self-denying, and the holy, may stand before the bar of the vicious, the impure, the voluptuous, and covetous Felix. Such things are trying both to flesh and blood, and to Christian faith. Here is need for the "faith and the patience of the saints." And it is written, "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. "For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promises; for yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith." And there are times when faith is our only support; but *the promise is*, "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall *not* depart from thee; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." "Clouds and darkness are round about the throne; but righteousness and judgment are the habitation hereof." The wind may be boisterous, the billows may swell; but if our eye remains fixed on Christ—if we loose not the sight of His promise—if we.

grasp it firmly and hold it fast—we shall never sink. Influences may combine that are hostile in their character and design—foes may unite—the appearances may be all unfavourable. Joseph may be not, Simeon be not, and Benjamin may be demanded also; but all these things are *not* against us. We remember that it is written, “He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.” We call to mind the touching words, “So He was their Saviour: in all their affliction He was afflicted; and the angel of His presence saved them. In His love and in His pity He redeemed them, and bare them, and carried them all the days of old.” We look to the record of the saints of old time, and we see one of them dying with the encouraging words on his lips, “Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord hath promised.” We see another emerging from a sore trial of his faith, uttering the beautiful words: “Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.” In the dim morning of Divine truth we hear the most tried of men say, as firmly as calmly, “Though *He* slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” And another voice comes sounding down through eighteen centuries, bearing to our ears, from a Roman prison,

the noble words, "But I know *whom* I have believed, and am persuaded that *He* is *able* to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." "Our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted in thee and were not confounded." With these examples before us, and a multitude more that time would fail to tell of, can you not, tried Christian, adopt as your own the exulting language of Paul, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." It may be difficult, but remember *who He is* that hath promised. While you recognise the Divine hand in your trials, and thus avoid "despising the chastening of the Lord," see also that you avoid indulging in those unwarranted doubts which would cause you "to faint when rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." Therefore, "Have faith in God." "He sitteth above the waterfloods; He sitteth king for ever." "He will make darkness light before you, and crooked things straight; these things will He do unto you, and not forsake you."

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning Providence
He hides a smiling face."

I now proceed to remark that we ought—

V. To Anticipate and Seek to secure the Divinely Intended Results.

And what are they? Here an important and extensive field presents itself, which must be reserved for *another meditation*. "He chastens us," says the Apostle, "for our profit that we might be partakers of His holiness." A higher result cannot be contemplated. If such may be the benefits ultimately secured by ever such long-continued and painful trials; it is a result, the contemplation of which should not only make us submissive but grateful, leading us to comply with the exhortation of James, "My brethren count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience. But *let patience have her perfect work*, that ye may be *perfect and entire*, wanting nothing." It should induce us with Paul to "glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Or, such views as the Divine Word opens to our minds, should constrain us to sing the exulting song of Charles Wesley—

"Though in affliction's furnace tried,
Unhurt on snares and death I'll tread;
Though sin assail, and hell thrown wide
Pour all its flames upon my head;
Like Moses' bush I'll mount the higher,
And flourish unconsumed in fire."

THE SCHOOL OF ADVERSITY.

PART THIRD.

"By the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better."—

SOLOMON.

"No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby."—PAUL.

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."—JAMES.

HAVING endeavoured to exhibit some of the teachings of the Holy Scripture on the subject of human suffering, and especially the sufferings of the pious, as made known in the HISTORY of the devout, and some of the *preceptive* instructions of the sacred records, I now desire to present some of the teachings of the sacred oracles and the Providence of God on the *ends, uses, and results* of sanctified trial.


In the volumes of nature, providence, and redemption, we have varied and extensive fields of inquiry and thought presented to us. Much as the Bible has been studied, it cannot be said to have as yet yielded up all its lessons and treasures to the devout inquirer. There may be certain fundamental truths, concerning which nothing very new or very original can well be expected. So many *minds have devoted their best energies to their*

Incident, that few of the intimations of the Sacred Book may have been overlooked, that can throw light on their varied bearings. Still, even on those every-day topics and most essential truths,—on the substance of “the common salvation,” “the faith once delivered to the saints,”—fresh modes of illustration may be expected; and, as the laws of mind become better understood, fresh views of their bearings on human progress and happiness, and the Divine glory may not unreasonably be looked for. He that will place his mind in humble and sincere earnestness at the feet of the Great Teacher, shall not study in vain, or lack divine illumination. Jesus will open *our* understandings that *we* also may understand the Scriptures. Many good men have written, and some have written well, on the teaching of the Bible, on the benefits of sanctified adversity. Still, this subject can scarcely be said to have had that amount of attention paid to it which its relation to human happiness, and the position which it occupies in the Book of God, demands; and as suffering forms so great a portion of the experience of humanity, one would have thought that “sympathy with the sorrowful” would have led the expounders of the Holy Book to have dwelt much more than they have done on this very inviting portion of the field of revealed truth. Our theology *is not* so humane and soothing a thing, as exhibited in our “Bodies of Divinity,” as it is when seen in the fresh and open fields of inspiration. Is

not this one reason why many have shrunk from Christianity as a harsh and unfeeling system? It is, as presented by Jesus, by Peter, by John, and by Paul, a winning, an inviting, and a soothing thing. Would that all the popular teachers of Christianity had been attentive to the *spirit* as well as to the *letter* of the teachings of Him, who said, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Or of him who said, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise." Or of him, whose lips were ever uttering words of love; and who, when old and feeble, was wont to be carried into the Church, and stretching out his aged hands, utter, with the utmost benignity and sweetness, his oft-repeated words. "Little children, love one another."

The teachings of Divine truth in relation to human suffering, form one of the most attractive features of the Sacred Volume. There are many fresh and beautiful, as well as *healing* flowers, which tempt us to stay here a while longer. The writer feels "it is good to be here;" he is unwilling to think that the further illustration of this subject will be unacceptable to the readers of his little book. It is a vein in the mine of truth which con-

tains much sparkling and precious ore ; it is a portion of this Sacred Book which affords touching and melting evidence of its Divinity. He that is suffering may study it for his own consolation. He who has a benevolent regard for others, and would "learn to speak a word in season to him that is weary," will find here abundant materials for "instruction in righteousness." Each one should study these aspects of Divine truth, because each will have to suffer, and each one had need learn the happy art of "comforting others with the comfort wherewith he himself has been comforted of God." I am, indeed, well assured that there are teachings which will well repay the thoughtful inquirer ; ministering to edification ; producing submission in the time of trial ; calm reliance on God in the darkest night ; in the most perplexing season of providential darkness ; when "deep calleth unto deep at the noise of His waterspouts ;" when "all His waves and His billows go over us." I thank God for leading my own mind to the study of the subject, as I have here met with instructions which, though they may be as old as the Christian era, are, nevertheless, cheering as the light, and refreshing as "cold water to a thirsty soul." They come home to one's "business and bosom" with a warmth and soothing power ; and, in the midst of difficulty and trial, lead the soul to "thank God, and take courage."

The position of man as a fallen and sinful being
 *should never be entirely overlooked in any exten-*

sive survey that is taken of human calamity and suffering. Many of man's suffering *even here* may be *punitive*; but I prefer, in this paper, looking at them more in their *disciplinary* and *corrective* character and tendency. Doubtless all feel, either to a greater or less degree, that suffering is an evidence and token of the Divine displeasure. When special calamity overtakes us, does not the conscience, as if by instinct, point to *sin* as the *cause thereof*? We feel that it is *right* that we should suffer, and that our greatest sufferings are infinitely less than our deserts. "It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed; it is because His compassions fail not." Still this is far from being the only, or, in my opinion, the principal view which a *good* man should take of the design and cause of his sufferings. We are directed to the *love* of God as the source thereof. "Whom the Lord *loveth* He chasteneth." "As many as I *love* I rebuke and chasten." It would be wrong to *overlook* the sinfulness of the sufferer: it would be, perhaps, not less wrong to *confine* one's attention to his sinfulness. We have no hope of clearing away the mystery that hangs around the origin of evil. But we do think that special and not unimportant advantages may be pointed out, as resulting from man's being placed by the providence of God in the School of Adversity. We take man as we find him: we study the operation of the *various* surrounding influences on his *character and destiny*; and, as a means of discipline, of

moral and spiritual education,—of preparation for the service of God here and hereafter—we think it can be shown that adversity and sorrow are means most wisely adapted to the promotion of these most important ends. The suffering and pious Cowper thus wrote :—

“For He who knew what human hearts would prove,
How slow to learn the dictates of His love,
That, hard by nature, and of stubborn will,
A life of ease would make them harder still ;
In pity to the souls His grace designed,
To rescue from the ruins of mankind,
Called for a cloud to darken all their years,
And said, ‘Go, spend them in the vale of tears.’
Oh ! balmy gales of soul-reviving air !
Oh ! salutary streams that murmur there !
These, flowing from the fount of Grace above,
Those breathed from lips of everlasting love !”

In my endeavour to point out some of the ends, uses, and results of sanctified personal suffering, I shall observe—

I. That it leads to a Better Understanding and Appreciation of the Bible.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God ;” but we necessarily prize and value the Bible only as we sympathise with its teachings. And how large a portion of the Sacred Volume is there that nothing can so effectually explain, as personal suffering? Many of its glorious lessons would never have been taught, had man never suffered. *As the night reveals the varied splendours of the starry heavens, whose glories are hid by the efful-*

gence of the light of day, so has the night of sorrow brought to our view many precious portions of the mind of God.

The withdrawal of the light of day unveils vast material glories ; and the going down of the sun of health and temporal prosperity, is often the precursor of important spiritual revelations. Some of the richest, sweetest, and most precious lessons of Jesus, first fell on the ears of sorrow. Had the disciples not been depressed at the thought of parting with their Divine Master, those inimitably tender and beautiful discourses which John has recorded, had never been uttered. Their value, however, is never fully understood or appreciated, until, when in trouble, we look round for consolation. *Then it is* that the voice of Jesus has music in it, as we hear Him saying, " Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions ; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and, if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." When the heart trembles for fear, and is bleeding with anguish and sorrow, there is more than beauty, there is consolation and power in the words, " Peace I leave with you : my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth give I unto you : let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." It is in the School of Adversity that we learn the meaning of *passages like the following*, " Come, my people,

enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment until the indignation be overpast—He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me upon a rock. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.—Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may; yet, will I not forget thee.—Behold, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands.” As sorrow sends us to the Bible for comfort, so sorrow is among the best interpreters of some important parts of its contents. Our tears are often the best glasses through which to look at the “Holy Bible.” Its writers are “*touched with the feeling of our infirmities.*” It is the most kind and humane book in the world. No other book can so effectually quiet the throbbing heart, wipe away the fast-falling tears, and hush the rising sighs of the sorrowful, as the Bible can. It has made us know ourselves as no other book ever did. And what is better, it “shows us the Father.” It tells us that, “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him: for He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are

dust." It is, unmistakably, the poor man's friend. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which He hath promised to them that love Him?" "To the poor the Gospel is preached." It well deserves to be called the "afflicted man's companion." It has, times unnumbered, beamed in brightness on the sorrowful countenance of the sufferer for righteousness' sake. It has often yielded up to the sorrowful its richest stores, and shone upon their souls with its most benignant light. When they have been confined to the sick-room, or lying in the dungeon, it has opened "fountains in the dry places, and streams in the desert." John Bunyan thus wrote when in Bedford jail—"I never had in my life so just an inlet into the Book as now. The Scriptures that I saw nothing in before are made in this place and state to shine upon me. Jesus Christ was never more *real* and *near* than *now*; here I have seen and felt Him indeed." Happy prisoner! As children are the objects of their parents' strongest regards and sympathies when ailing: so it is often the case with the pious. God comes nearest to them when suffering.

It was while they were in the furnace, that the Hebrew worthies were honoured by the visible presence of "one like the Son of God." It was while "John was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of *Jesus*," that his risen and exalted Lord visited him.

and unveiled to him the stupendous scenes and sublime glories of the Apocalypse. And in modern times, not a few have sung—

“When my sufferings most increase,
Then my strongest joys are given,
Jesus comes with my distress,
And agony is heaven.”

Clear is the meaning, and most refreshing to the minds of the suffering, are such texts as the following: “But, now, thus saith the Lord, that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel; fear not, I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; *thou art mine*. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flames kindle upon thee.” Beautifully has the poet caught the meaning of this precious text, and admirably has he rendered it into verse, in the noble hymn, beginning—

“Peace, doubting heart, my God’s I am,
Who formed me man forbids my fear,
The Lord hath called me by my name,
The Lord protects for ever near:
His blood for me did once atone,
And still He loves and guards His own.”

Many a simple-minded, illiterate, suffering Christian, has a more correct understanding of, and a more hearty sympathy with, many portions of the *Bible*, than many a profound Biblical scholar, who has never sat in the School of Adversity. And many an able minister of the New Covenant, and

many a profound divine, can say, that for the more complete understanding of the sacred Scriptures, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

II. *Another of the Uses of Adversity is that of Ministering to the Development and Manifestation of the sublimity and Transcendent Power of Mind.*

God has implanted in the human mind the capacity for deriving pleasure and elevation from the contemplation of the Sublime and Beautiful. For the gratification of this capacity, He has made abundant provision ; in the diversified scenery of the earth ; in the vast and solemn sea—now calm as a lake, and now lashed into tempest—in the glories of the rising and setting sun—and especially in the surpassing splendours of the midnight heavens.

"How beautiful, how beautiful !
To gaze upon the sky !
And view the myriad gems of night,
Shining all silently !
What are they ! worlds or nothingness ?
So beautiful, so grand !
What are they ?
Spheres of endless bliss,
Where angels ever stand ?
Thy finger, Lord, hath placed them there,
Shrouded in mystery !
Hath hung them in eternal space,
With dread Sublimity."

But there is something more glorious than matter, however vast. There are objects more sublime than the whole material universe. Mind rises incon-

ceivably higher than matter in any or all of its multiplied and varied forms. The splendour of the sun grows dim before the splendour of a human mind. And it is the saying of an uninspired heathen, "That a good man bearing up under the pressure of calamity is a sight worthy of the gods." He felt the force of the sublime of mind, rising superior to the heavy pressure of calamity and suffering. As the withdrawal of the sun unveils the glory of the spangled heavens, so does the night of sorrow develop and exhibit the sublimity of mind. Think of Milton, in old age, poverty and blindness, composing "Paradise Lost." Think of Bunyan, writing the "Pilgrim's Progress" in a jail. See them not only bearing up, but rising nobly superior to the keen and heavy pressure of Adversity, and you there see the magnanimously sublime. "Paradise Lost" is regarded as the sublimest of uninspired compositions. How does the amazing sublimity of the author's mind impress us, when it is remembered, that at the time he wrote it, he was surviving the death of his party—the death of that liberty in defence of which he had so eloquently written, and I may add, *so eloquently lived*. He was poor, old, blind, neglected, and despised; to use his own language, "fallen on evil days, and evil tongues." It covers the book with glory, it throws over it a radiance of a special character when we go from *this truly* sublime book to the sublimer mind of its author. If "Pilgrim's Progress" is not so sublime, it is a not less wonderful book. It also was written

in the same strange age, by, perhaps, a stranger man; one who, like Milton, was proscribed. Glorious indeed is the triumph of mind over outward circumstances, when an unlettered tinker rises above proscription, imprisonment, and poverty, into the fine field of imaginative thought which that book exhibits. *Here we see the true sublime.* "There were giants in the earth in those days." Bunyan was a hero in a heroic age. Most conspicuous for the power of mind, and the riches and splendour of genius, are the two Johns, Milton and Bunyan. We think better of our common nature that they have lived. The circumstances in which they were placed—the School of Adversity into which Providence put them—did the work well of educating and developing the powers of their minds; the sublime and dazzling glory of their souls. Had Milton not been blinded, then the world might never have been blest with that richly gifted revelation of the sublimity of his mind, "Paradise Lost." Had Bunyan not suffered imprisonment, he might never have been able to write his matchless and inimitable allegory—"Pilgrim's Progress."

By nature these men were gloriously gifted. They were each blest with creative genius. And in a subordinate, but not less real, manner, have many of their brethren and companions in tribulation, and sharers of our common humanity, manifested, in the season of suffering and trial, the sublimity of mind. Many whom Providence appointed to "blush unseen," whose names were to

"fortune and to fame unknown," have, in the day of trial, risen nobly above the influence of calamity. They "endured hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." Many who seemed too feeble to brave a storm, much less to subordinate its violence to their mental development—whom none suspected of having anything of the heroic in their souls—have, in the School of Adversity, become a "wonder unto many." Many a feeble woman has cast a glory over her sex, and done honour to humanity by the efforts—the sublime efforts—that she has made to provide for her fatherless children, when a mysterious Providence had smitten down the arm on which she was wont to lean. Many, whose nature has appeared as susceptible and shrinking as the sensitive plant, have evinced a power of endurance, and a capability of active effort, which none ever suspected to lie hid behind their mild features, and enshrined in their tender and delicate frame. Adversity has awakened dormant energies, and called into prominent action unsuspected capabilities of mind and heart. It is the storm that disciplines and evokes the mental powers of the mariner. It is the battle-field that brings into full play, and discovers to himself and to others the abilities of the military general. And it is in the storm and battle of life that the heroic is evinced and matured in our souls. John Foster in his powerful *Essay on Decision of Character* observes, "I lately happened to notice with surprise, an ivy, which, finding nothing to cling

beyond a certain point, had shot off into a bold elastic stem, with an air of as much independence as any branch of oak in the vicinity." It is thus also in the world of mind. The removal of all outward sources of dependence often brings out, and seems to the thoughtless to *create*, the most beautiful and sublime powers of mind. The martyr-fires have appeared dim, and their power to hurt taken away, by the amazing power and sublime glory of mind which the sufferer has evinced. Merely as displays of the sublimity of mind, we should deprecate the loss of the martyrologies of the Church. Oh! I have stood by the couch of the suffering, when the mind has been sustained by void of offence, and the consolations of piety, and I have felt a depth of wonder at the power — the sublime power — there manifested, which no displays of material splendour, however vast, could possibly inspire. I have gazed with wonder on the wide expanse of ocean in a state of calm, and with greater wonder and admiration still on the same object in the time of tempest and storm. I have looked up to, and considered the heavens the work of God's fingers, the moon and stars which He hath ordained, and my soul has been elevated and awed by the sight. But I have been much more awed, impressed, and moved, as I have stood by the couch of the suffering Christian, whose mind has borne up under the pressure of *excruciating* pain, often associated with the neglect and coldness of those from whom better things

might have been expected: all this endured for *fourteen years*. The mind calm, while the body was torn with almost unintermitted pain, for fourteen years. Here I have not only thought, but *felt*, that I was looking upon the truly sublime. Nor ought this view of the subject to be overlooked, when we seek to estimate the ends, uses, and results of Adversity. Here we behold that which raises our estimation of the mind with which God has endowed us, and as the result, our adoration of its Great Author, the "Father of spirits." It is a sublime sight to look upon the ocean, when its billows seem to rise in anger against the puny being whose vessel is riding on its surface. It is a sublimer sight still to see that same puny being, by tact, prowess, and skill, display the power of mind over matter, and despite the anger of the billows, and the power of the storm, guide the noble vessel into the desired haven. We feel, as she glides so majestically over the swelling waves, and the anchor drops, and the ship is moored in safety, how sublime a thing is mind. So also the soul's successful battles with the tempests of life, are of immense service in promoting respect for mind, and solemn and profound reverence and worship of Him who "breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul."

III. *Another of the Uses of Sanctified Suffering is its Ministering to the Maturity and Perfection of the Christian's Character.*

When a man is brought "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God;" when he is "born again," "born from above;" when he becomes "a new creature," having experienced "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," all the elements of a perfect man in Christ Jesus exist within him. They are there, but in an immature, imperfect, and undeveloped condition. They are all there, but they require to grow, to mature, to develop themselves. All the subsequent dealings of God towards him are designed to bring out, to develop, to mature, and perfect that which already exists in the regenerate soul. Indeed the work of spiritual growth is simply *the growth of the human soul*. It is not something foreign to the man that is to grow; but the man himself, it is the maturing of himself, the growth of his soul "in knowledge and true holiness." The child, though a man in miniature, requires to thrive and mature, ere he can perform the work of a man. "The child is father to the man." The sapling, however small and tender, contains all the elements of the wide-spreading tree: indeed the tree exists in the seed of the acorn—

"From a small acorn see the oak arise,
Supremely tall and towering to the skies;
Queen of the groves, her stately head she rears,
Her bulk increasing by her length of years.

"Now ploughs the sea a warlike gallant ship,
Whilst in her womb destructive thunders sleep;
Hence Britain boasts her wide extended reign,
And by the expanded acorn rules the main."

It is the work of years to complete its growth : to make the difference between the tiny sapling which an infant's hand could bend, and the sturdy monarch of the forest. God designs new converts to become "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified." "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God ; they shall bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing." Jesus says to His disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Various are the means by which Almighty God seeks to promote the growth and maturity of the plants of His own right hand planting. The words of Jesus are remarkable and impressive : "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." In addition to the varied influence of the seasons on the trees ; besides the shining sun, the falling rain, the gentle dew, the nipping frost, and the rude storm ; the Heavenly Gardener prunes, purges, lops off useless twigs, and, in various ways, inflicts wounds on the fruit-bearing branches, that they may bring forth more fruit. The operations to which some trees are subjected to promote their fruitfulness is very severe. Mr. Cecil tells us, that *he was one day walking in a garden during a season of mental depression and gloom, arising from the*

severe trials which he was then called to endure. His heart was bleeding with anguish, and his soul cast down within him. While he was pacing the garden walks, and musing on his painful trials, he observed the gardener cutting a pomegranate tree so deeply and severely, that he was afraid he would cut the very life out of it. When he inquired of the gardener the cause of his making such deep incisions into the tree, he told him that it had borne no fruit for a long time, and that he was thus cutting it, not to promote its vigour, but its *fruit-bearing life*. Mr. Cecil said, the lesson went home to his heart. The gardener had no pleasure in thus mangling the tree, but its future fruitfulness required such severe handling. The Heavenly Gardener "doth not afflict willingly," but, not unfrequently severe cuttings and woundings are necessary for the maturing and developing of the fruit-bearing nature of the tree. It is not necessary that the treatment of the tree be always gentle, or that the weather be always mild, and fine, and sunny, in order that it may grow and mature. The gentle shower, the heavy dew, drenching the boughs and moistening the roots, the bright sunshine, the soft, mild air, and the digging and constant attention of the gardener, are all useful. All minister to its growth. So, also, do the storms which bend the branches, shake the roots, and loosen the soil. Oaks do not grow in hot-houses. They mature slowly but surely under the various storms and calms which God sends. The storms subserve the pur-

It is the work of years to complete its growth : to make the difference between the tiny sapling which an infant's hand could bend, and the sturdy monarch of the forest. God designs new converts to become "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified." "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God ; they shall bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing." Jesus says to His disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Various are the means by which Almighty God seeks to promote the growth and maturity of the plants of His own right hand planting. The words of Jesus are remarkable and impressive : "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." In addition to the varied influence of the seasons on the trees ; besides the shining sun, the falling rain, the gentle dew, the nipping frost, and the rude storm ; the Heavenly Gardener prunes, purges, lops off useless twigs, and, in various ways, inflicts wounds on the fruit-bearing branches, that they may bring forth more fruit. The operations to which some trees are subjected to promote their fruitfulness is very severe. Mr. Cecil tells us, that he was one day walking in a garden during a season of mental depression and gloom, arising from the

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beneficial influence on him in a manner which he never can while on earth. But, if he is a wise and observant man, he will see, in his increased purity and usefulness, in the matured character of his life, and in his growing likeness to Him who was "meek and lowly in heart," enough to lead him, not only to acquiesce in the wisdom, but to admire and adore the love of Him who chastens us, *not* "after His own pleasure," but "for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." How often do we hear persons, when grown up, and occupying influential and important situations in life, acknowledge, with gratitude, the wisdom and kindness of the treatment which their parents subjected them to in early life, though, at the time, they thought it rigorous and severe. On the other hand, many of the sad evils which break the hearts of aged parents, and bring down their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, are the natural and necessary results of unwise indulgence in early life. God does not spoil His children. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth ; if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" Adversity, then, is necessary for the development and maturity of the Christian's character.

It is one of the profoundly wise sayings of Lord Bacon, that "virtue is like precious odours, most *fragrant* when they are most incensed or crushed ; *for prosperity* doth best discover vice, but adversity

doth best discover virtue." Dr. Cheever draws some very useful and important lessons from the processes of vegetation, as illustrative of spiritual truth, in an excellent volume that he has just published, on "The Voices of Nature." One extract from that volume I will here introduce :—

"The land," says he, "that is burned over in this season, may be the earliest and richest in its springing vegetation in the next. The very ashes of the nettles prepare the soil for useful culture. Indeed, we have been sometimes wandering in a region, where, in the early spring, we have had a sudden and instructive demonstration of this truth, and have set it down for the sake of the moral analogy. The grass was green, and of a vivid freshness, where the ground had been burned over ; but a little beyond, scarce a blade could be seen peeping from the withered, matted, dull covering of last year. It was an emblem of the uses of adversity, when God for gracious purposes sets the fire."

I shall close this chapter with an extract from a discourse of that profound thinker and eloquent writer, Dr. A. Vinet. "Suffering and death, introduced into the world as the symbol and consequence of the fall, formed two extremes ; and they were destined to contribute, in the hands of Jesus Christ, but in His hands alone, to the purification of fallen men. Jesus Christ, consequently, was careful not to suppress them. He seized upon this evil to convert it into good. *Impotent and unfruitful without Him, suffering*

has become by Him a *germ of life*. And, in fact, brethren, after having accepted Jesus Christ, imagine all suffering suppressed; suppose that with Jesus Christ death itself had died, introduce the believer without transition into peace and security; were not this to take from faith all its exercise, all means of establishing and developing itself, and were it not to wish that the germ should never become a tree? How will you prove it not to be necessary after, as before the advent of Christ, for man to pass through suffering in order to arrive at joy? And through death in order to arrive at life? There could be no change of this necessity—a necessity as inevitable as that which nailed the Saviour to the cross—no, there could be no change of this necessity. Jesus Christ, then, has not abolished it, but He has given a meaning to our sufferings and our mortality, and He has made them, what they never could have been without Him, *a bitter dew which develops and matures in our souls the blessed germ of faith.*"

THE SCHOOL OF ADVERSITY.

PART FOURTH.

"Nevertheless, I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever."—ASAPH.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."—PAUL.

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the revelation of Jesus Christ."—PETER.

ALTHOUGH this is the *fourth* meditation on the School of Adversity, the subject appears to my own mind to widen, extend, and increase in interest. It is a mine in which, the deeper you dig, the more precious and sparkling are the treasures which you discover. It is a vale in which, the further you proceed, and the longer you remain, the more lovely the flowers appear, the more refreshing the breezes, and the more musical and salutary "the streams that murmur there."

There are sufferers who, I hope, have been

consoled and instructed by the views of truth that have been presented, and who have thus become more reconciled to their painful lot, and resolved, calmly and firmly, by the aid of Divine grace, "to glorify God in the fires."

Let each of us, however, remember that the afflictive dealings of God towards us are only useful, as they induce us piously to acknowledge His Providence, bow meekly to His will, and seek assimilation and conformity to His image and revealed purpose. This *will* be the case if we are wise in the use and improvement of the dispensations of Providence, and the opportunities with which we are blest. But if Adversity be *not* sanctified and improved,—if it do not produce "the peaceable fruits of righteousness,"—its influence on our souls will be injurious; and Our Father may say, "Why should you be stricken any more; ye will revolt more and more; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." The power of the human spirit is an *awful power*—that of rendering everything, whether painful or pleasant, subservient, either to its elevation or depression,—its weal or woe,—its final and eternal happiness or misery. How many, alas! by their own perverseness, render trial a means of making them "wax worse and worse," until they become at last "vessels of wrath fitted for destruction." Were it not for the perverseness of their minds, the insubordination and rebelliousness of their wills, and the crookedness of their ways, they might be made "perfect through

suffering"—“meet, through consecrated pain, to see the face Divine.” But they live and die without “kissing the rod, and Him that appointed it.”

Thoughtful reader, let us fear lest this be *our* fate. It need not be so. God is love. With a Father's eye He looks upon us; with a Father's hand He chastens us; and with more than a Father's patience He “waits to be gracious.” If we bow uncomplainingly to His will; “if we take hold of His strength;” if we meekly suffer, and unfalteringly trust, if we “love God,” “all things” shall work together for our good. Our characters are forming for eternity; our natures are developing either under wrong or right principles—the principles of selfishness or love, rebellion or subordination—we *are becoming what we shall continue to be for ever*. Ere long the Great Arbiter of our final destiny will say, with an authority that cannot be disannulled, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.”

I most solemnly conjure thee, serious reader, that thou frustrate not the designs of Infinite Love; that thou reject not the counsel of God against thyself; and judge not thyself “unworthy of everlasting life.” But, oh, as thou wouldst be eternally happy, be resolved that henceforth *thy un failing* aim shall be that of bringing *thy whole soul* into complete harmony with the

will of Him, who says, "My son, give me thine heart."

In endeavouring to point out some of the ends, uses, and results of sanctified suffering, I have stated that it leads to a better understanding and appreciation of the Bible; that it ministers to the development and manifestation of the sublimity and transcendent power of mind; and to the maturity and perfection of the Christian's character; and in the present meditation I proceed to remark that—

IV. Sanctified trial is a Means of Preparation for Future Usefulness.

It is one of the many admirable and deeply suggestive sayings of Paul, that "no man liveth to himself." A man's affections and personal aims may centre in himself; he may have no regard or concern for the welfare of others; he may be dead to all public or philanthropic sensibilities; he may be a living personification and embodiment of selfishness; his reply to every inquiry made, as to what he is doing for the good of others, may be that of the first murderer, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Nevertheless, the saying remains true, "No man liveth to himself." He may have as little fear of God as regard for man: he may be "without God;" or he may adopt the daring language of the haughty Egyptian tyrant, "Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?" But he is *unable* to shake off his dependence on, and his *responsibility* to, God. He is a creature; God

had important designs in bringing him into being; he is ever an object of divine care; and, either as an obedient and happy, or as a disobedient and unhappy, intelligence, he shall still be constrained to "give glory to God." It is a remark as common as it is true, that none can rightly sympathise with the sufferings of others, but those who have *themselves* suffered. Even of Jesus we are told, that "in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

"Touched with a sympathy within,
He knows our feeble frame;
He knows what sore temptations mean,
For He hath felt the same."

If suffering was necessary to prepare Jesus Christ for exercising sympathy with sufferers, surely we need not expect to be prepared for "binding up the broken-hearted," except by a baptism of personal suffering. Few persons are more unlovely and unloved than the cold-hearted and unsympathising. But sympathy with the sorrowful—a heart ready to melt, and eyes prepared to weep, at "the various forms of human woe"—gives an amiability to human character, and renders the subjects thereof both lovely and loved. As we are prepared to "weep with them that weep," we become like *Him* whose tears flowed so fast over the grave of

His friend Lazarus, who wept over Jerusalem, and who left us an example that we should follow in his steps.

“How sweet is the tear of regret,
That drops from humanity’s eye,—
The cheek that with sorrow is wet,
The bosom that heaves with a sigh !”

A most enviable art is that of “knowing how to speak a word in season to him that is weary ;” and this art is best learned in the School of Adversity.

It seems at times painfully mysterious to see the young, the useful, the devout, the hopeful, and the untiringly laborious, laid aside from active toil, shut up in a sick room, languish in feebleness, and have wearisome days and nights appointed to them. Why not be allowed to remain at their useful and delightful toil? Why that physical prostration and suffering for so long a time? Because in future days one part of the sufferer’s duty will be that of visiting the sick. With them, and for them he will have to pray, and tell them of Him who in all our afflictions is Himself afflicted ; to point them to Him who “bore our sicknesses, and carried our sorrows.” He who intends to use that invalid as “a son of consolation,” a comforter of mourners, in preparing him in that sick room for one important part of the work of his future life. It is one of the dark and trying dispensations of Divine Providence, when he, whose spirits are overflowingly buoyant—who can throw, and who delights to throw, a soul full of fire and earnestness into the cause of God—is all at once

arrested in his joyous career, by the influence of an unseen hand. By that hand those nerves that seemed so healthful and elastic are at once unstrung. Those spirits that once enabled him to do or dare anything, completely fail him; and that high-souled and heroic youth becomes more timid and feeble than a little child. All his enthusiasm died within him. He once could lead on the sacramental host of God's elect, in the war with error and sin, to glorious victory. He comforted and inspirited others. His voice was heard the loudest in the Christian battle-field. "The high praises of God were in his mouth;" he preached with success and power. But now, poor man, he needs comfort himself; his powers are feeble; he fears his own shadow; he goes down into the waterfloods; "his feet sink in the mire;" "he does business in the great deep;" and he fears that Infinite Love itself cannot reach his case. He is afraid that he has become "a castaway." "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of the waterspouts; all God's waves and His billows go over him." Sounds the most dolorous fill his ears, and issue from his once cheerful voice; and he says, with deep fear and solemn trembling, "Is the mercy of the Lord clean gone for ever? doth His promise fail for evermore?" He becomes a wonder unto many; all observe, but few can understand his case. He "writes bitter things against himself," and, sad and painful to think! there are those who should seek to bind up that "bruised reed," and heal that trembling

and "stricken deer," who rudely repulse him, add anguish to grief, and cruelly trample on the fallen. He is not, it is true, without sympathy; some few understand his case, and encourage him with the hope that these clouds will be dispersed, that this mist will all clear away, that the gloom will be removed, and who would, if they could, inspire him with courage to say, "Yet the Lord will command His loving-kindness in the day time, and in the night His song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life." They would assure him, that he shall yet, with a voice more deep and cheerful than before, "sing of mercy and judgment." To himself, however, his case is most painful and mysterious; to his relations and dear friends, his sad and melancholy looks, his suppressed sighs, his silent and lonely wanderings, and his dimmed eyes, are more painful than death itself. A dark, dark cloud, that for a time no ray of light can penetrate, hangs over his sorrowful and gloomy soul. The past is dark, the present darker still; but the future seems, to his perturbed mind, to be "*the blackness of darkness for ever.*" He can scarcely pray, he does not dare to hope; but he says, "The Lord hath forsaken me." He dares not complain of the injustice of the stroke; he acknowledges himself to be the cause thereof: and with thoughtful sadness he declares, that his sins have found *him out*. This, dear reader, is no fancy picture; *it is from "real life."* And why is it that such discipline is appointed to a human soul? What is

the ultimate design of these painful experiences? Will these flames not consume him? Will these floods not drown him? These fires cannot consume him; these floods cannot drown him. Why? Because God is training him in His own way for doing His appointed work. He is now in the School of Adversity indeed, but he shall not always remain there; these dark clouds shall roll up the mountains; these mists shall be exhaled by the rising sun, and the horizon of his soul shall become clear and sunny once more. His mind shall regain its former composure; he shall become buoyant and joyous again. Again shall those dim eyes sparkle with gladness, and he who thought himself forsaken of God, shall emerge from his gloom and depression, saying, with calm and holy fervour, "Nevertheless, I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." This painful experience shall not be in vain, these keen trials shall not be lost upon him; they are of a kind that he can never forget, they will make an impression on his being that cannot be erased, and will deposit seeds in his soul that shall surely grow, and produce in after times the "peaceable fruits of righteousness." When he meets with the suffering—as meet with them he will, on his voyage across

"life's solemn main"—he will understand their complaints, and sympathise with their woes. His hand can reach down to where his "brethren and companions in tribulation" are lying prostrate and sorrowful. Their strange and melancholy sentences he can understand, and he knows how, in some degree, "to succour them that are tempted." His experience in the School of Adversity has thrown important light on the question, "What is man?" It has been of incalculable service as a commentator on the Sacred Book. With its deepest and most heart-moving utterances he can now sympathise, and comfort others with the comfort where-with he has himself been comforted of God.

If these pages should be looked over by any whose experience has been here, portrayed, allow me, my brother, tenderly and soothingly to grasp thy hand, and with affectionate earnestness say, My companion in tribulation, try to hope! "for though darkness may endure for a night, yet joy cometh in the morning." The night may be long and starless, but assuredly the sun will visit thee again. Try to hope: "For it is good for a man that he both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of God." Try to hope, my brother, thou art in good hands after all. Thou mayest be saying, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me," but listen to His soothing reply, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I *not* forget

thee ; behold, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands." Try to hope, my brother, for others have been where thou now art ; and if the writer of these remarks had not suffered, these papers would never have been written. Even the giant mind of Sir Isaac Newton was once, for a whole year, as prostrate and feeble as your mind now is, but he regained his former mental vigour, "and at the age of eighty was fully able to understand his own *Principia*, affording a cheering memorial of the kindness of Providence." Hope thou in God, my brother, and thou also shalt yet say, "He brought *me* up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto our God ; many shall see it, and fear and trust in the Lord." Have faith in God, for although

"In the furnace God may prove thee,
Thence to bring thee out more bright,
He can never cease to love thee,
Thou art precious in His sight ;
God is with thee ; God, thine everlasting light."

And should these papers be read by any who *cannot* understand or sympathise with sufferers, such as those spoken of above, I charge thee, friend, don't be rude to the suffering ; don't insult the fallen ; those whom God hath smitten are sacred ; break not the bruised reed—"considering thyself lest thou also be tempted."

How many cases does the history of the Church of God present of persons whose training illustrates

what I am seeking to establish ! How many of her most honoured and distinguished sons received a very important part of their education in the School of Adversity ! Of some whose biographies are recorded in the Bible, I have written in a former chapter. It would be no difficult task considerably to swell their number. Very many of those whose works praise them in the gate—who, while living, were “a tower of strength” to the Church ; and whose writings will continue to edify mankind to the end of the world—were indebted for much of their choicest knowledge to the School of Adversity. Two names come up in the comparatively modern history of the Church that are “familiar in our mouths as household words,” whose case I cannot pass by without a word : Martin Luther and John Bunyan. How great is our debt of gratitude to God, for the blessings resulting from the Reformation, it is impossible to estimate. In the history of that glorious work, Luther stands pre-eminent above all others. “The solitary monk that shook the world.” The importance of his work will continue to swell as time rolls on. I do not say that his personal character was perfect, or that the Reformation itself was all that we could desire. But of his name, the Church of God will never need to be ashamed. Well, how was Luther prepared for the magnificent work which he performed ? In what school did he learn the sublime lessons which his life and writings so admirable teach ? Where did he acquire that rugged *honesty*, intense earnestness, heroic hardness, and,

when moved, more than womanly tenderness? Admitting that Luther had originally a noble nature, still the proper and more correct answer is, Luther had suffered. His noble nature had bled. Ah! if the walls of the Augustine convent could speak, if the stones of the lonely Wartburg had a voice; they would tell a wondrous story, as to what it cost Luther to become, what through mercy he was, and to do what, by the blessing of God, he did. If ever man knew mental anguish, and intense spiritual conflict, that man was Martin Luther. And if ever man was honoured and blessed of God, he was. When tempted at times to think himself forsaken of God, with what deep emotion he uttered language like that of Asaph—emerging from his depression with the words on his trembling lips—“Nevertheless, I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.”

Coming down more than a hundred years from the time of the glorious Reformation, we, in our own land, meet with the distinguished author of *Pilgrim's Progress*. Bunyan had not such educational advantages as Luther had; nor was his early life so commendable as that of the Doctor of Wittenburg. But there was much that was homogeneous in their natures; and they both belong to

the glorious company who, having turned "many to righteousness, shine as the stars for ever and ever." Bunyan could not have done what Luther did—translate the Bible into his mother tongue. Nor did he need to do so; that was well done before he was born. But he did translate and enshrine Christian experience and divine truth into a new language—the language of allegory. And it is impossible to tell into how many different dialects Bunyan's book has been translated, or how many souls it has guided to heaven. While it is refreshing to read the eloquent tributes to the superlative excellency of the book from the pens of Southey, Macaulay, Cheever, and Gilfillan; it is much more so to think of the tens of thousands of immortal minds which *Pilgrim's Progress* has guided into "the way of righteousness." And where did John Bunyan acquire the ability thus to write? Where did he learn the holy lessons so ably and interestingly taught in his wonderful book? Emphatically, in the School of Adversity. In that school, perhaps, the reader may now be placed. Be encouraged by the benefits which others have derived from suffering; and remember the important exhortation of James—"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Think of the words of Jesus—"Every branch in me that beareth fruit, he *purgeth* it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

Calmly and firmly repose on the divine word ; meekly bow to the divine will ; anticipate the divinely intended results ; and learn to sing, even in the School of Adversity :—

“ Pleasure, and wealth, and praise no more
Shall lead my captive soul astray,
My fond pursuits I all give o’er,
Thee, only Thee resolved to obey ;
My own in all things to resign,
And know no other will but thine.”

Another of the uses of adversity is,

V. The Promotion of the Divine Glory by the living exhibition of the Elevating and Sustaining Power of Personal Piety.

It not unfrequently happens that matured Christians, whose “affections are set on those things which are above ;” whose wills are brought into hallowed harmony with the divine will ; whose varied trials have evidently effected their purifying and perfecting influence on their souls ; and who have a “desire to depart and be with Christ,” are nevertheless detained for a long time, in deep suffering, in a world that they are prepared and desirous to leave. The pious mother, whose life has been a most beautiful embodiment and manifestation of the spirit of Jesus, may have toiled with unwearied diligence, and prayed with fervour and many tears, for the conversion of her family ; but the souls that have been objects of so much solicitude, and so many prayers, may still remain unsubdued and unsaved. There is deep and strong affection in the

children's hearts for the mother ; there is reverence for her name ; there is respect for her authority ; but the mother's Saviour, though sometimes thought of, is not trusted in ; the mother's God, though feared, is not loved and obeyed ; the mother's piety is not imitated by them. How are these hearts to be reached ? How are these souls to be brought to Jesus ? By what means are these children of many prayers to become converted and saved ? Will God add to the illustrations that the past has afforded, of the value and worth of the principles enshrined in that devoted parent's soul ? Yes, in " His love and in His pity," He is pleased to do so. They have seen the influence of piety on the mind and character in the time of health. They must now see its sublime influence in the season of affliction. That Christian mother is visited with disease that baffles the physician's skill, and frustrates the power of the healing art. On the bed of pain she lies for months ; to the sick room she is confined for a long season. Her sufferings are mysteriously intense and protracted. And while the sacred susceptibilities of the children's souls are excited on account of those sufferings ; while they bend over their mother's couch, watch over her, and minister to her wants, they see in her calm countenance, beaming eye, and peaceful soul, a still more precious illustration of the value of Christian principle and experience. In that state of susceptibility into which the mind is brought, the sacred truths that emanate *from the sufferer's revered lips* penetrate the soul

of the child ; and what could not be done in any other way is effected in this ; and the sufferings of the mother become, by Divine grace, the means of the happiness and salvation of the child. To the parent the process is painful ; it is still more trying to the affectionate child ; but while the mind of the one is sustained and comforted by the truths of the Bible, the heart of the other is won for Jesus. The glory of God is thus promoted : the end of redeeming love effected ; and the suffering mother enabled to say with a saint of yore, " Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." With a spirit thrilling with gratitude and praise she departs to mingle with the elevated beings, of whom the Saviour has said, " Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

This is, we conceive, an important and consolatory view to be taken of some of the, otherwise, mysteriously painful dispensations of Divine Providence : and will help us to understand why some souls eminently holy and ripe for glory, are, nevertheless, detained in this sinful and suffering world. There are minds who need the peculiar kind of light that beams from the bed of suffering. The power which sterling piety has of calming the turbulent mind, soothing the soul in sorrow, and developing the magnanimous and sublime in our nature, is a noble and glorious power. It was a true, heroic, and an electric sentence which Hugh

Latimer addressed to his fellow martyr as they were together marching to the stake—"Cheer up, brother Ridley, we shall this day light such a candle in England, as, by the grace of God, shall never be put out." Thank God, it has *not* yet been put out. This light has long had a home in England; hence our sea-girt isle has ever been the asylum of freedom. But let us remember that we owe, under God, these blessings to the Christian heroism of our forefathers, and let us prove ourselves worthy sons of those who so manfully and earnestly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints. The sufferings of the martyrs were not only a blessing to after-times, but to their own age as well. Their meekness and calm fortitude, their noble bearing at the stake, sent the truth, for which they suffered, burning and blazing in the hearts of many of the bystanders. I once read of a female whose Christian deportment at the stake was rendered the means of the conversion of five hundred souls. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain." On the above text, the admirable and devout Leighton makes the following excellent and eloquent remarks: "When was the Church free from the world's wrath? I say nothing of the Church of the Jews. Did not those wicked Emperors of Rome think to make the Christian Church short-lived, to have drowned the newly-born in floods of her own blood? And in latter days, who knows not the cruelties that have been practised by the Turk in the East, and the proud Prelate

Rome in the West? by which she hath sometimes been brought to so obscure and low a point, that if you can *follow her* in history it is *by the track of her blood*; and if you would *see her*, it is by the *light of those fires in which her martyrs have been burned*. Yet hath she come through and sustained all that wrath, and still shall, till she be made perfectly triumphant." And not only has she sustained it, but these very persecutions were overruled by the wisdom of God, for the advancement of her purity and the augmentation of her numbers. So that it became a proverb, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." I am reminded of one of the fine and characteristic sonnets of Milton, occasioned by the persecutions the Waldenses suffered in his day, and on whose behalf he and Cromwell so nobly and successfully interposed :

ON THE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT.

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold ;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
Forget not : in thy book record their groans,
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold,
Slain by thy bloody Piedmontese, that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vails redoubled to the hills, and they
To Heaven. *Their blood and ashes sow,
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant ; that from these may grow
A hundredfold ; who having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe."*

The Jewish captivities were often overruled

the Providence of God, to the good of the people whose captives they were. They carried with them their sacred writings and their religious ideas, and thus dispersed the knowledge of God in strange and heathen lands. Think for instance of the Babylonian captivity; while it was the means of purging the Jews from their love of, and well known tendency to, idolatry, it was also the means of spreading the knowledge of God through the length and breadth of the Babylonish and Medo-Persian empires. The stories of the heroic conduct and miraculous deliverances of the three Hebrew worthies, and of Daniel, were instruments of immense good. The proud monarch of Babylon was not the only one who was brought to acknowledge the authority, and bow lowly before the throne of the true God. Doubtless many in authority, many philosophers and wise men, as well as the masses of the common people, received Divine illumination by the Israelitish nation being for seventy years placed in the School of Adversity. The history of the great personal sufferings, various persecutions, and imprisonments of St. Paul contains, perhaps, more than the history of any other man, illustrations of the benefits resulting to others from the sufferings of the devout. His multiplied and unparalleled trials not only prepared him for weeping with them that wept, but also for writing his tenderly beautiful letters, and comforting others with the comfort wherewith he was himself comforted of God. He said, "I would ye should understand, *brethren*, that the things which have happened unto —

me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel ; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places ; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." His imprisonment was the means of the knowledge of the Saviour being carried into the palace of the Cæsars. His glorious example stimulated others ; and thus his personal sufferings glorified Christ, by the enlightening the Gentiles, and the quickening and establishment of the saints.

Now this view of the sufferings of the pious is a most important one. Our sufferings, which are means of our personal purification, of preparing for future service, of loosening our affections from the earth and raising them to heaven, are at the same time, if rightly borne, a means of bringing us into closer union and fellowship with Jesus, and of promoting our usefulness to others.

THE SCHOOL OF ADVERSITY.

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

"Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning *shall be ended*."—ISAIAH.

"Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, *that they* may behold my glory."—JESUS CHRIST.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."—PAUL.

IN the former chapters, I have spoken of sanctified trial as leading to a better understanding and appreciation of the Bible; as ministering to the development and manifestation of the sublimity and transcendent power of mind; to the maturity and perfection of the Christian's character; also, as a means of preparation for future service; and the promotion of the divine glory, by the living exhibition of the elevating and sustaining power of personal piety. But vast and varied as are the benefits, as seen in the *present*, we require to draw *aside the veil* from before the *future* state, to exhibit *them* in their sublimest and most glorious aspect. *If the teachings of Holy Scripture were confined*

to time, the spirit of the sorrowful might droop within him. But there is an hereafter. God's plan extends through endless ages. The issues of time shall continue for ever. Let the thoughtful reader, therefore, accompany me while I endeavour—

VI. *To Contemplate Sanctified Sorrow and Trial in their Final and Ultimate Results.*

It has been often said, that, "All is well that ends well." When perplexed with a long series of dark and mysterious circumstances, we inquire anxiously, "What will be the end of these things?" And if asked, how will sanctified trial end? we answer without hesitancy or misgiving, "It will end well." "Say to the righteous, it *shall be well* with him." "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the *end of that man is peace.*" How "*has* sanctified trial" ended in ten thousand times ten thousand instances? Ask the holy men of old; inquire of the departed saints of more modern days. "Ask thy fathers, and they will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee." But will *any* of them complain of the result? will *Jacob*, who, once in haste and deep grief, said, "All these things are against me?" Did not he say afterward, in the spirit of devout satisfaction when a-dying, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord?" Will *Asaph*, whose "feet were almost gone, whose steps had well nigh slipped?" Did he not also, afterward, in a wiser and holier mood of mind, learn to say, "Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward

receive me to glory." Will Paul complain of the result? Did he not, when in the utmost extremity, declare, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Was it not one of his many admirable and consoling, as well as suggestive sayings, that, "All things work together for good, to them that love God?" Will David, who once said, "I shall surely fall by the hand of Saul?" Did not he learn a lesson of fuller confidence, and mingle the warblings of his trustful soul with the roaring of waves, and the billows that rolled around him? and were not his last accents on earth, and his first in heaven, those of praise and loving joy? Or will Job, the most tried of men, complain of the end? "Brethren, ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." Ask the whole host of those who have "endured chastening" and been "exercised thereby." They are all yonder before the throne; they came out of "every nation, and kindred, and tongue;" and they "came out of great tribulation."

"Once they were mourners here below,
And wet their couch with tears;
They wrestled hard, as we do now,
With sins and doubts and fears."

Ask them their opinion on the bearing of sorrow and trial on themselves; and is it not the univocal testimony of each and all of them—"He hath done all things well. Our sufferings and trials are *only* ended, but they have ended well. We

better and holier, and shall be so for ever, as the result of our many sufferings and sorrows on earth. We felt, during the time of trial, that no chastening for the then present was joyous, but grievous ; but we now know, not only from the testimony of Scripture, but of our own experience, that, ‘afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.’ But for our trials, we might never have reached this happy place ; for before we were afflicted we went astray, but since, we have kept the Divine law. And we feel sure, that but for trial, we should never have been in this spiritually *perfected and glorious state*. The Father of spirits chastened us for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness ; and we were made

‘Meet, through consecrated pain,
To see the face divine.’”

Dear reader, it is of infinite importance that we remember in our time of severest trial the divine injunction, “Be not slothful, but followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” And that we call to mind, *who* said, “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light ? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.” “Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that shall try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you.” The fire shall not consume, but refine you.

I will now introduce an illustration of the ultimate

uses and benefits of trial from "the good Pastor Oberlin." He, when writing to a lady in suffering circumstances, sought to comfort her in the following manner:—"I have before me two stones which are in imitation of precious stones. They are both perfectly alike in colour: they are of the same water, clear, pure, and clean; yet there is a marked difference in them as to lustre and brilliancy. One has a dazzling brightness, while the other is dull, so that the eye passes over it and receives no pleasure from the sight. What can be the reason of such difference? It is this, the one is cut but in a few facets; the other, has *ten* times as many. These facets are produced by a very violent operation; it is requisite to cut, to smooth, and to polish. Had these stones been endued with life, so as to have been capable of feeling what they underwent, the one which has received eighty facets would have thought itself very unhappy, and would have envied the fate of the other, which having received only eight, had undergone but a *tenth part* of the suffering. Nevertheless, the operation being over, *it is done for ever*. The difference between the two stones always remains strongly marked; that which has suffered little, is *entirely* eclipsed by the other, which alone is held in estimation, and attracts attention." This illustration is as beautiful as it is instructive and encouraging. We have seen often, in our observation of human character, a vast difference and a striking contrast between the disposition and character of those who have, and those who have not

been great sufferers. The greatest *misfortune* that ever befell some people was their *great success*. We have seen how it has hardened the heart, and while producing pride and an unbecoming haughtiness of disposition, it has made them cold and contemptuous in their spirit and conduct toward their less fortunate friends. The failure of some is their salvation; and if honest in what we say to them, we should congratulate them on their losses. I have seen numerous painful illustrations of the moral influence of continual success, of a most injurious and unamiable character. The moral nature has been shrivelled under the constant sunshine of prosperity. Their wealth and their health, and their general outward good estate, have entirely destroyed their moral excellence, or left only very few traces behind, to remind us that they are still human. And I have seen the refining, the softening, and the beautifying influence of painful and long-continued trial, producing a mellowness of soul, and a richness of sympathy, that wealth could never purchase. This kind of fruit grows most plentifully in the land tilled by hard trial, and watered by many tears. In more senses than one does it remain true, that, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." This fruit never withers; it lives through all future seasons; its flavour is felt both by its possessor, and by all with whom he comes into immediate contact. It gives a tenderness to his spirit, and an amiability to his character, that leads little children to love him; and the

sorrowful instinctively to cling to him as a friend. They feel that he can sympathise with them. If he is a preacher, his sermons will have a humanity and a Christ-like excellency about them, that will make him ever acceptable to the children of sorrow, and he will be a most welcome visitor in "the house of mourning." If he is an author of any genius, his books will, like the poems and letters of Cowper, be likely to be generally acceptable, and will be clung to with special affection and thankfulness by those who are sitting in the School of Adversity. And the character once established, it is established for ever. The soul is purified for eternity; it shall shine as a star in the Saviour's crown for ever. Thus our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us, *or work us up* to, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." While we believe in heaven as a *place*, it is more especially a *state* of perfect purity, and holiness, and love. And "without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." We are too apt to think of heaven in its *objective*, rather than in its *subjective* character. It is both; but the subjective heaven prepares for the objective. Heaven begins where holiness begins; it matures as holiness matures.

"Grace is glory in the bud; glory is grace perfected." Let us dwell then on the final results of sanctified trial; the perfection of our nature; our full conformity to the image of Jesus, a meetness for, *and the happy possession of*, "the inheritance of the

saints in light ;" a complete conformity to the mind, and an eternal enjoyment of the presence of Him who, as our great High Priest, was "made perfect through suffering." And let us be consoled by the thought that the darkest night soon ends ; that the winter lasts not all the year, but the time of the singing of birds comes round again, and "the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." Amid the blossoms of spring, the laughing glories of summer, and the golden fruits of autumn, the frosts and storms of winter are forgotten, or remembered with joy. The longest voyage on the most stormy sea has an end. "Then are they glad, because they be quiet, so he bringeth them unto their desired haven." The journey of life may seem a long one, but "there is an *end*, and the expectation of the righteous shall not be cut off." The fire may be heated seven times hotter than it is wont to be heated, the gold may remain long in the crucible over this fire, but it shall lose nothing but the dross ; but shall shine all the brighter, and become more and more "meet for the master's use." "But he knoweth the way that I take ; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." The last day of trial will come ; the last pain be felt ; the last battle be won, and "the last enemy" be found "under my feet at last," and I may die calmly and joyously, saying, "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The soul then shall be brought safe home.

And this is not all. The trials, the conflicts,

the sorrows shall not only end, but they shall end *gloriously*. The spiritual power, and purity, and gentleness acquired by effort, and conflict, and "sacred grief," shall not *die with* us, but *continue* and *increase for ever*. The tried and purified Christian shall be "found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the revelation of Jesus Christ." The saint has become what he shall remain for ever, holy and kind, and happy. His will has learned submission to God; his affections entwined themselves indissolubly around the Saviour; his soul is eternally saved. He has been polished *here* to shine in and adorn the holy city *there*. His eyes have been prepared to see

"The king in His beauty displayed,
His beauty of holiest love."

His ears are attuned to listen to, and enjoy, while his voice and soul are prepared to sing the "New Song." And yonder he is among the "great number which no man can number, who have come out of great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all *tears from their eyes*."

There are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; once they were pilgrims and strangers on earth, earnestly desiring, what they have now found, "a better country, that is a heavenly." There is Moses, having crossed the Jordan, and taken possession of his lot, "in the heavenly Canaan." David also is there, his harp strung to higher strains of sacred melody, and his soul with a sublimer joy than he ever felt on earth ; he is "satisfied, having waked up with the divine likeness." Isaiah is there, his glorious and far-seeing eyes gazing with intense and unbounded delight on "the king in his beauty ;" no longer speaking of "the land as a very far off." "The man that had seen affliction," Jeremiah, the "weeping prophet," is there, realising the truth of his own beautiful words, that, "It is good for a man that he both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God." "All his suffering days are over." God has wiped all tears from his eyes. And there is Daniel, "shining as the firmament, and as the stars for ever." John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, is there, his head is still leaning on Jesus' breast ; he is "like Him, for he sees Him as He is." Peter, too, is there, enjoying, without interruption or alloy, "the excellent glory." Paul also is there, proving the truth of his inspired reckoning, "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." His "light afflictions, which were but for a moment, having worked out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." There is Watts—

“Bathing his weary soul
 In seas of heavenly rest,
 Nor doth a wave of trouble roll
 Across his peaceful breast.”

Baxter is there, enjoying in perfect security and fullness “the saints’ everlasting rest.” John Howe is there, with calm and sublime rapture, realising “the blessedness of the righteousness.” “The Poet of Methodism,” Charles Wesley, is there, who often sung of heaven, and with whom his favourite stanza in old age, which he often sung, when he called at City Road to see Henry Moore, was—

“There all the ship’s company meet,
 Who sailed with their Saviour beneath,
 With shouting, each other they greet,
 And triumph o’er sorrow and death :
 The voyage of life’s at an end,
 The mortal affliction is past,
 The age that in heaven they spend
 For ever and ever shall last.”

The German Christian poet, Gerhard, too, is there who, more than a century ago, sung so many sweet and soothing strains of sacred song ; some of the choicest of which John Wesley translated in English, and has incorporated into his own admirable hymn-book. God has long since answered Gerhard’s beautiful prayer—

“If rough and thorny be the way,
 My strength proportion to my day ;
 Till toil, and grief, and pain shall cease,
 When all is calm, and joy, and peace.”

Among the countless company he is also found, *who sung in immortal strains of “the Rock of Ages.”*

“ While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eye-lids close in death ;
When I soar to worlds unknown,
And behold Thee on Thy throne ;
Rock of Ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

There, too, among the happy company, is the amiable, sensitive, shy, and despondent, and mysteriously afflicted William Cowper ; his soul in perfect harmony with the Divine will, and its sweet and mellifluous effusions no longer interrupted by the influence of a disordered nervous system. He is *happy now, for ever happy.*

“ E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.
“ Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I 'll sing thy power to save ;
When this poor, lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave.”

There, too, is the devout and holy Doddridge, who entered so deeply into the spirit of his Divine Saviour, and sung many never to be forgotten strains of sanctified song.

“ When death o'er nature shall prevail,
And all the powers of language fail ;
Joy through my swimming eyes shall break,
And mean the thanks I cannot speak.
But oh, when that last conflict's o'er,
And I am chained to earth no more,
With what glad accents shall I rise
To join the music of the skies !”

Nor must we omit to add that Dr. Richard Winter Hamilton is there, who of all modern preachers and authors has written with most eloquence and condensed power and beauty on "the heavenly state;" and who, when dying, felt the full comforts of the glorious truths and principles which he had so long and so eloquently preached; and who, while triumphing over death, and anticipating a happy re-union with his departed friend, John Ely, asked the widow of his friend if she had any message to send to her dear husband. He is there, and with what holy rapture will his wondrously gifted soul expatiate on, and revel amid, the glories and splendours of his eternal home. A sentence or two from this most gifted man I must be allowed to quote. "But when we read of the words of this life, it is eternal life—this 'life is in his Son!' It is life which stands alone from all besides—life incomparably greater than any other life, that which is only worthy of the name. It is the scope and inspiration of the whole. Its doctrines, like stars, sweep onward to that source of light. Its promises, like gentle whispers, cheer the Christian pilgrim's heavenward way. Its duties, like self-denying but self-recompensing means of health, brace the spirit for its struggles with mortality. Its graces, like angels, just alight below, that they may waft us in their swift return where they can only rest. It summons *us* to forecast. We look beyond ourselves. It *answers* to what we already feel. We have the *inward* experience. We boast a present salvation.

‘It doth now save us.’ ‘Our faith *hath* saved us.’ ‘We are saved by hope.’ ‘God who hath saved us.’ Mysterious preparations are hastening in our hearts. ‘Christ is in us, the hope of glory.’ And so manifestly does ‘grace’ prepare for ‘glory,’ so plainly is the rudiment of heaven contained in genuine piety, that we may mark, as it were, the growth of the spirit’s wing, its supple joint and callow down, which, when clothed with its plumage, and poised in its strength, shall bear it up, and speed its flight to that heaven from which suns, left far beneath, look little, poor, and dim!” His sublime spirit has flown thither, and has met, amongst other glorious redeemed ones, John Bunyan; who thus closes his “Pilgrim’s Progress:” “Now I saw in my dream, that these two men went in at the gate—the which, when they did, some from above looked over the gate, to wit, Enoch, Moses, Elijah, &c., to whom it was said, ‘These pilgrims are from the City of Destruction for the love they bear to the king of this place.’ And then the pilgrims gave in unto them, each man his certificate, which they had received in the beginning; these, therefore, were carried to the king, who, when he had read them, said, ‘Where are the men?’ To whom it was answered, ‘They are standing without the gate.’ The king then commanded to open the gate, that the righteous nation, said he, that keepeth the truth, may enter in.

“Now I saw in my dream that these two men *went in at the gate!* and lo! as they entered, they

were *transfigured*, and they had raiment put on that shone like gold. There were also others that met them with harps and crowns, and gave them to them; the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honour. Then I heard in my dream that all the bells in the city rang for joy, and that it was said unto them, 'Enter ye into the joy of your Lord.' I also heard the men themselves, that they sang with a loud voice, saying, 'Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.'

"Now, just as the gates were opened to let in the men, *I looked in after them*, and behold the city shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold, and in them walked many that had crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps to sing praises withal. There were also of them that had wings, and answered one another without intermission, saying, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord!' And after that they shut up the gates, which, *when I had seen, I wished myself among them.*"

THE END.

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the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased from 10.5 million to 12.5 million, and the number of people aged 75 and over has increased from 4.5 million to 6.5 million (Office for National Statistics 2000). The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase to 15.5 million by 2020, and the number of people aged 75 and over to 8.5 million (Office for National Statistics 2000). The increase in the number of people aged 65 and over is expected to be due to a combination of factors, including a decline in the birth rate, a decline in the death rate, and a decline in the rate of emigration.

The increase in the number of people aged 65 and over is expected to have a significant impact on the UK's economy and society. The increase in the number of people aged 65 and over is expected to lead to a decline in the number of people in the workforce, which will lead to a decline in the number of people who are able to pay taxes. This will lead to a decline in the amount of money that is available to fund public services, including the National Health Service (NHS). The increase in the number of people aged 65 and over is also expected to lead to a decline in the number of people who are able to support themselves, which will lead to a decline in the number of people who are able to pay for their own care and support.

The increase in the number of people aged 65 and over is also expected to lead to a decline in the number of people who are able to work, which will lead to a decline in the number of people who are able to pay taxes. This will lead to a decline in the amount of money that is available to fund public services, including the NHS. The increase in the number of people aged 65 and over is also expected to lead to a decline in the number of people who are able to support themselves, which will lead to a decline in the number of people who are able to pay for their own care and support.

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